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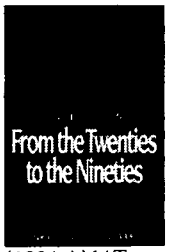

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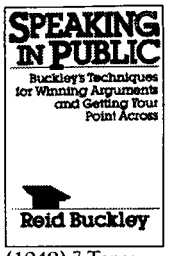

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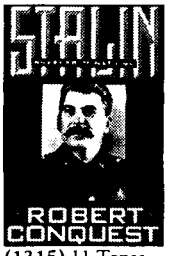

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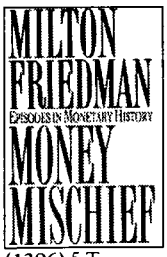

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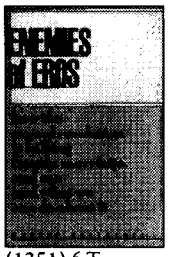

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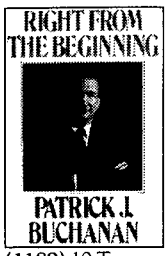

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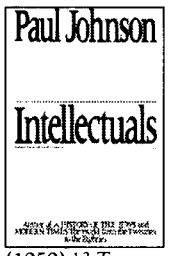

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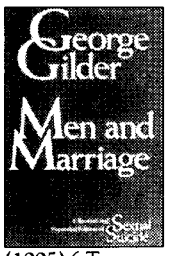

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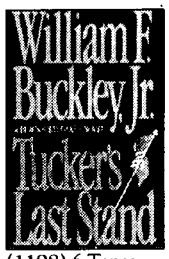

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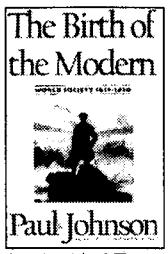

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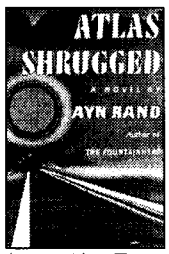

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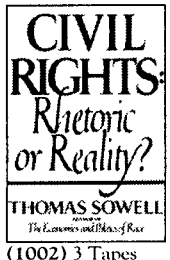

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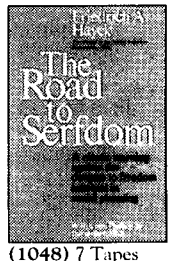

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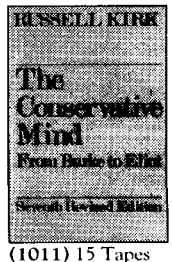

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What are the facts?

The Root of the Middle East Conflict. Many observers of the Middle East scene seem to believe that the root of the Middle East conflict lies in the dispute between the "Palestinians" and the Israeli Jews; that peace could come to the area if that conflict could be resolved and if Israel yielded the administered territories to the Arabs. They overlook that the conflict between Palestinian Arabs and Jews long predates Israel's control over the administered territories, and that Israel would be defenseless if it were to yield control of these territories at this time.

The Menace of Islamic Fundamentalism. The clamor for yielding these territories to the Arabs is the first step in the immutable Arab attempt to liquidate Israel altogether. Because, certainly, Israel, with its fewer than 5 million inhabitants, compared to almost 300 million Arabs, cannot possibly be a threat to peace or a menace to the Arabs. The main reason that real peace is so difficult to attain is the political and cultural context of the Middle East, which is dominated by the menace of Islamic fundamentalism. By the tenets of this fundamentalism, Israel's size is not of importance; it is *the very existence* of Israel which is an intolerable offense, an unacceptable insult to Islam. The fundamentalist Moslems—Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and all the others—do not aim at peace with Israel or the recovery of some territory. Their publicly declared aim is the destruction of the Jewish state. In December of 1991, the Islamic Jihad stated: "...we will be satisfied with nothing but the destruction of Israel."

Real Peace Must be Global. Another reason that real peace will be difficult to attain in the present climate is that any agreement that could be attained in this round of negotiations would be a non-global one. The most fervent enemies of Israel—Iran, Iraq, Lybia and the Palestinian rejectionists—not only do not participate in the negotiations, but vehemently oppose them. Those Arab statesmen who have tried to come to terms with the Jewish state have invariably found a terrible end. King Abdullah of Transjordan was assassinated by the rejectionists, so was President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, and so was Bashir Gemayel of Lebanon, all of whom envisioned peaceful co-existence with Israel. Every Arab leader knows that any overt declaration of wishing to make real peace and to co-exist and to co-operate with Israel is a suicidal death sentence.

> "Real peace...can only happen through complete change of mentality, policies and historical ambition in the Arab-Iranian block."

In view of these realities, is real peace possible? We all want peace, of course, especially the Israelis, who, five wars having been imposed on them, have been almost constantly embattled since the foundation of their state. But because of Arab-Islamic fundamentalism that cannot tolerate a Jewish presence on *any part* of "Arab territory" and because any peace arrived at would be non-global, such real peace would seem difficult to attain at this time. Real peace can only come about through a complete change of mentality, policies and historical ambition in the Arab-Iranian block, abandonment of fanatic fundamentalism, and change in governance from despotism to genuine democracy. And that may well take a very long time. In the meantime, Israel must keep up its guard and cannot afford—not even to please its friends, including the United States—to yield strategic territory, without which it would be vulnerable.

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ABOUT THIS MONTH

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE
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by *Wladyslaw Pleszczynski*

LAST MARCH 3, in remarks delivered to several hundred friends and admirers gathered to honor the late Warren Brookes at Washington's Four Seasons Hotel, Vice President Dan Quayle showed himself quite capable of deriving positive images from American television. He hailed Brookes as the "Sergeant Joe Friday of American journalism," someone who had always wanted "just the facts," "a swell guy to know unless you were up to no good." The Veep also demonstrated why he's as politically astute and courageous as anyone in the Bush Administration when he paid tribute to Brookes's yeoman work in exposing the misrule of Michael Dukakis in not-so-miraculous Massachusetts. "Nothing was more devastating to our opponents in 1988," Quayle said, which explains why Warren never won a Pulitzer. Truth be told, the only person missed more than Ronald Reagan these days in Washington is Warren Brookes (though we can be grateful that his indefatigable and intelligent reporting is emulated this month by James Ring Adams, writing on the Iraqi grain-for-guns scandal on page 18, and by Daniel Wattenberg, giving chase to Hillary Rodham Clinton on page 25).

QUAYLE MENTIONED Brookes's unique ability to close the "gap . . . between information and understanding" in a number of public policy areas, an example of which appears on page 33 in Brookes's uncannily insightful farewell to the American bank. It's an essay that could easily have appeared on conservative stalwart Robert Bartley's *Wall Street Journal* editorial page (as readers of Robert Novak's review of Bartley's new book will immediately infer—see page 53), though probably not in conservative stalwart James Grant's *Grant's Interest Rate Observer* (as readers of Joe Mysak's review of Grant's latest book will infer even faster—see page 54). Far removed from Wall Street, one can safely ask: Why do such indispensable economists and journalists as Bartley and Grant seem to talk past each other? With Reaganomics increasingly falling into disrepair, it's not a question defenders of economic freedom should want to avoid. You can bet your bottom dollar Warren Brookes would not have ignored it. Perhaps after Murphy Brown goes on welfare this fall, Vice President Quayle will address it in his stead.

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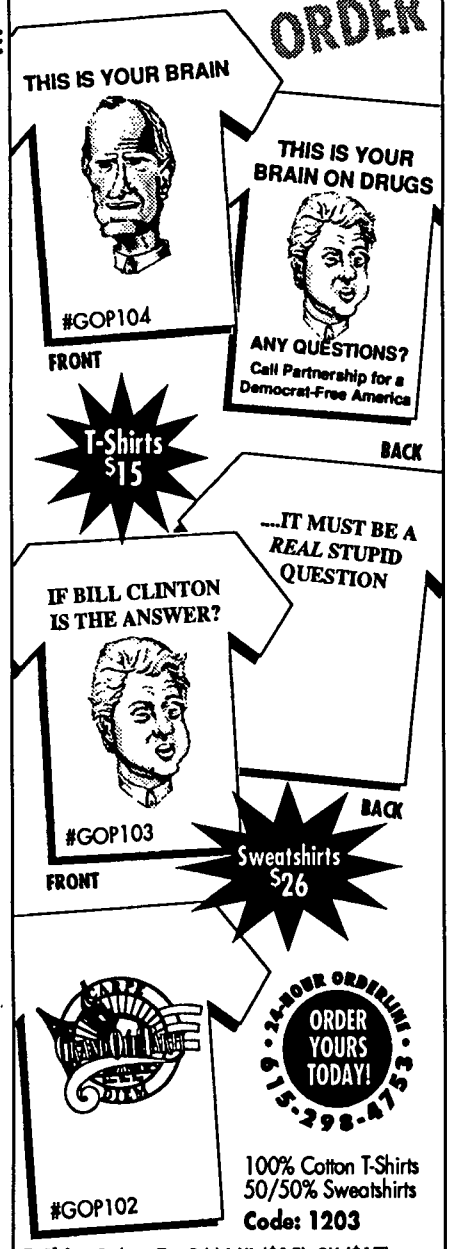

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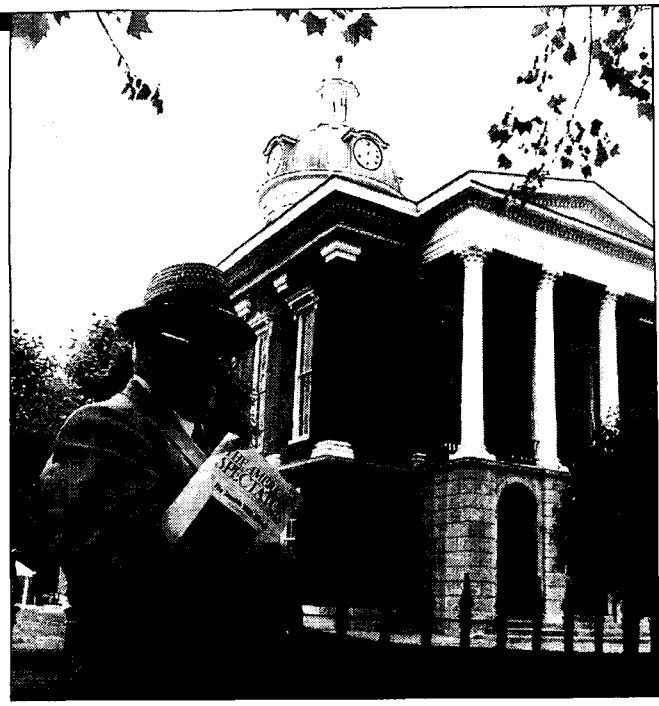

Clyde G. Culbertson, M.D., a researcher for Eli Lilly & Company in antibiotics and immunizing agents such as the Salk polio vaccine. Dr. Culbertson keeps THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR "Back Home Again in Indiana," where THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR was founded in 1967. This picture was taken in front of the Switzerland County, Indiana, Courthouse.

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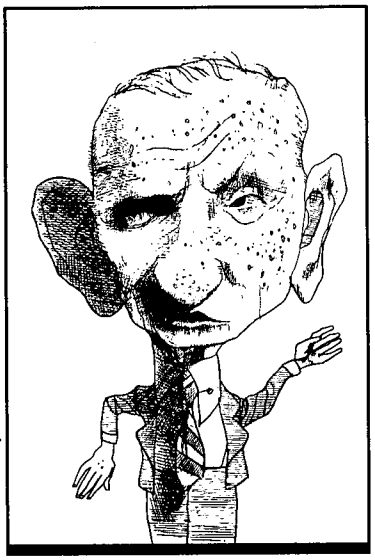

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• June is exhausted and so am I. For six weeks I have been on a book tour for my new tome, *The Conservative Crack-Up*, daily popping in and out of dozens of TV and radio studios, covering hundreds of miles between dawn and dusk, and frequently going without my matutinal Jane Fonda aerobics drill, during which I perspire copiously on a picture of Jane seated in a North Vietnamese anti-aircraft weapon pointed at the foul Yanks above. Simon & Schuster has treated me handsomely, setting up many guest appearances of a non-life-threatening nature, providing me with comely escorts, and even putting me up at Manhattan's only Motel Six and, in San Francisco, at a very nice shelter for the homeless.

• Since my 1984 tour for *The Liberal Crack-Up*, the world has changed stupendously. Then I was viewed as a Reaganite, anti-Communist warmonger. Now I am viewed as a Reaganite with no Communists to oppose and no war to mong. Consequently, whether being interviewed by Mr. Tom Snyder or Mr. Samori Marksman of the far-left Pacifica radio network, I am not a sudorific; the level of hysteria is down; there is no sense that I am a subverter of world socialism with a vested interest in World War III. World socialism is hard to find, and World War III is not high on anyone's national agenda.

• On tour these days I wear a genuine Red Army pin, which I purchased several weeks ago in free Prague. Upon entering a studio I notify my interviewers that I, being a literary guy, have become a Communist. So many American literary types in this century have had a fling with Communism. By doing so they convinced the critics of their profound sensitivity to human needs, such as, I suppose, the need to be stopped on the street, the need to be beaten up, and the need to be thrust into a concentration camp. At any rate, many literary critics, including Alfred Kazin and Malcolm Cowley, have been very impressed by the artistic sensibility of the writer who becomes a Communist. Hence on my book tour I am claiming to be a Communist, and with an arty flourish I flash my Red Army pin. It is the best of times to be a Communist, there being no enemies of the people to oppress, no midnight calls from the Soviet embassy, in fact no Soviet embassy; and Lillian Hellman is not only ugly but dead.

• Yet on a book tour one thing is very much as it was in 1984. The American intelligentsia remains anti-intellectual and dour. The Cold War may be over, but the American intellectual remains lost in his morbid preoccupations over such idiotic quiddities as the gender of this last possessive pronoun that I have so insouciantly employed. About the only happy American intellectuals left are the radio talk-show hosts, who have given me great pleasure at every interview. They are also about the only intelligent intellectuals left. This is perhaps because the talk-show hosts can speak their minds in defiance of all the bugaboos and oleaginous pieties of the bovine intelligentsia. After all, most radio hosts appeal to normal Americans, who are all free of the stultifying airs of the *Kultursmog*. *Kultursmog* is what passes for culture in America's circles of influence: government, public education, Congress, the arts, health food shoppes, Volvo dealerships, massage parlors. *Kultursmog* is on my mind, because it is a major thesis in *The Conservative Crack-Up* that American highbrows no longer live in a culture but rather in a *Kultursmog* polluted by the politics of fanatics, all as dangerous to free thought as Gary, Indiana, is to fresh air. Twelve years of Republican ascendancy at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue have only allowed the smog to worsen. Franklin Roosevelt managed to invest New Deal ideas and New Dealers into the culture of his era, and John F. Kennedy had a similar influence, but our Republicans have had almost no influence on the culture of their time. Why is this? There are two reasons. One, the automatons of the New Age Liberal intelligentsia have the oppressive mentality of ancient American Know-Nothings, and for that matter even many of the Know-Nothings' archaic public policies. Secondly, Republicans—even many conservative Republicans—do not thirst for public life, for new ideas, or for any of the other elements of culture. When an atrocity such as the lynching of Clarence Thomas or the beatification of the ghastly Anita Hill takes place the right goes into a frenzy, but by then it is too late. The only agents available to help are a handful of bewildered Republican politicians and the likes of Rush Limbaugh, a paladin from the wholesome world of radio talk shows but a paladin who has to stand up alone against the entire *Kultur* of writers, academics, publicists, and the evening news.

• How can the conservatives repristinate the *Kultursmog*, or at least render it less noxious? In *The Conservative Crack-Up* I have essayed the problem to the best of my capacities; and as for solutions, well, we must become the environmentalists of intellect. Let us get out there and make pests of ourselves. The expiry of June also is attended by the expiry of Boy Clinton's presidential prospects—demonstrating anew that no Democrat seeking his party's nomination must ever say anything that is thoughtful, true, or in the public interest. The coalition of Roosevelt has been superseded by a coalition of arrant charlatans, all of whom maintain power over their chumps by taking offense at the first glimmers of good sense from a Democratic presidential candidate. Last spring Senator Bob Kerrey was victimized by the party's mountebank homosexualists for an off-the-record joke,

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and soon this Congressional Medal of Honor–winner was groveling as the average voter winced. On June 13, Boy Clinton expressed misgivings about the killing of white people whilst addressing the Rev. Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition of civil rights paragons. This controversial position gave immediate offense to the Rev, who saw it as a play for white votes and a sign of a "character flaw."

• The Rev. Jackson's position on killing white people is an on-the-one-hand and on-the-other-hand sort of thing. On the one hand, if the whites are killed for the advancement of civil rights and in a non-violent manner it is understandable, particularly if they are landlords. On the other hand, if they are killed gratuitously during an important mugging or looting it is an excessive use of force, and they should be given a Christian burial. But Governor Clinton was not so even-handed. Moreover, he crassly criticized one of the most thoughtful participants at the Rainbow Coalition's solemnities, rap diva Sister Souljah, who had notified the *Washington Post* that "If black people kill black people every day, why not have a week and kill white people?" A week was simply too much for Governor Clinton; and now the Rev. Jackson is making another attempt to enter Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations*. Raps the Rev: "The attempt to align me with her is an attempt to malign me with her." So goes The Liberal Crack-Up!

• Apparently the scheduling of the Democratic National Convention in New York City will not be affected by this month's crackdown on five renowned Big Apple bordellos, though the convention is going to be pretty dreary for the handful of heterosexual men who still attend the Democratic assemblage. Two hundred ladies of the night are now unemployed, and according to Mr. Larry Stephen, the left-handed, right-footed assistant district attorney, the metropolis will be drained of up to $2 million annually, that being the advertising revenue that the ladies' employers spend in the *Village Voice*, *New York* magazine, and *Screw*. In Australia, Mr. Richard Dickinson, who was jailed five years ago for stomping his mother to death at four o'clock in the morning after she objected to his repeatedly playing the Bob Dylan hit, "One More Cup of Coffee for the Road," was given a weekend furlough to attend a Bob Dylan concert. No one was hurt. In Sandusky, Ohio, ten police were suspended or reprimanded for their role in stealing $600 in Girl Scout cookies. The "Today Show" spoiled breakfast for millions of Americans by reporting on the pregnancy of a 32-year-old homosexual hermaphrodite who also appeared to suffer from dreadful acne and body odor. Now the fey fellow's doctor reports that the pregnancy was faked and there was no reason for thousands of us to take our corn flakes to the other room. Finally, on the day that Russian President Boris Yeltsin dined in the White House solemnizing the end of the Cold War, special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh's grand jury indicted one of those responsible for ending it without a shot, the former secretary of defense, Mr. Caspar Weinberger. Mr. Yeltsin was surprised, and Mr. P.J. O'Rourke signed to cover the political conventions for the Fox network.

—RET

Associated Press

It's not too late to read
The American Spectator!

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Never on Sunday

Tom Bethell, in "Darwin in the Dock" (*TAS*, June 1992), flatteringly says that I am one of three (with Bill Bennetta and Kevin Padian) who are "passionately committed to the evolutionist cause, and to naturalism in general. For years they have been trying to stamp out impure thoughts in areas where religion and science show signs of overlapping."

I was not aware that I have been trying to stamp out impure thoughts in *any* areas. I would hesitate to attempt this. Even President Carter has disclosed how difficult it is to prevent the intrusion of such fantasies. My "passionate commitment" to the evolutionist cause is channeled mainly into the task of editing manuscripts for the *Journal of Molecular Evolution*: a job that calls for much reading and is arduous rather than passionate. If only Bethell, Phillip Johnson, and others who proclaim incessantly that they don't believe in evolution would read the *Journal of Molecular Evolution*, they might learn something of a subject of which they have but little understanding.

For Bethell to place Darwin in the dock, as some kind of prisoner, requires considerable temerity. Erwin Chargaff has said, "That in our day pygmies throw giant shadows only shows how late in the day it has become." Bethell quotes Johnson as blaming Darwinism for the "atheistic domination of intellectual life," which reminds me of the young soldier's mother who blamed the army for inventing sex. In blunter terms, the baseball evangelist Billy Sunday said the same thing as Johnson sixty-seven years ago: "The consensus of scholarship can go to hell for all I care. Old Darwin is in hell." He then passed the collection plate.

Bethell's final paragraph alleges that Johnson thanks God that his overtures for a judgeship in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals were turned down. Here, finally, is a point on which we can agree with Johnson. We, too, are thankful that he is not a federal judge.

—Thomas H. Jukes
Professor of Biophysics
University of California
Berkeley, California

Sexual Self-Determination

I am emboldened to write by a letter you published in the June issue from a loyal reader who is a male homosexual, who wrote in to protest a gratuitous negative characterization of gays in your April issue. He said, "There are many more of us quite conservative poofs than you could possibly imagine."

I am a loyal conservative reader who is female, and who believes absolutely in women's reproductive self-determination (read: pro-choice). Your magazine is great except when someone goes off on an anti-abortion or "family values" rant. Don't you realize how many people are "conservative" precisely *because* we want the government out of our lives? Get out of my bed, Dan Quayle! Nobody invited you!

Why not leave the politicizing of sex to the feminists and other liberal "ists" who have done such a great job staking out that territory? There are more of us quiet conservative believers in sexual self-determination than you could possibly imagine!

—Tama Starr
(author, The "Natural Inferiority" of Women*)*
New York, New York

Currents of Wisdom

I read the May 1992 installment of "Current Wisdom" with special interest. I usually skim the excerpts simply to savor the unintentional self-parody, but the selections from male feminists praising Gloria Steinem offer material worthy of further study. . . . The tone of the comments from Bill Porterfield in particular suggests a type of sado-masochistic encounter. He and his fellows were "on [their] knees in the fetal position" as Steinem "flailed away." Later, he referred to a series of wives who passed on the "billy club of rectitude." This violent imagery, as pathetic as it is ridiculous, becomes his metaphor for liberation.

The imagery suggests a kind of pathology at work. Perhaps Steinem does not intend to generate such a response, but in her recent autobiography she emphasizes her own lack of self-esteem. Is it possible that she is trying to exorcise her own private demons? What better way to establish her own sense of worth than by stripping others of their self-worth—and making herself the agent of their recovery.

Some such process appears to be one of the engines that drives feminism, although I prefer to think that it is not the only source. Steinem gains an illusion of freedom. Even for Steinem, it is a dangerous illusion since it allows her to evade any true self-knowledge. What illusion compensates the male feminist who joins in this exercise?

—Joseph Bator
Evanston, Illinois

Not So Passive

Christopher Caldwell's article on smoking ("Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," *TAS*, May 1992) is worthy of a certified first-class government bureaucrat, i.e., full of claims and supposedly sophisticated study results, but of course totally out of touch with the real world.

He also continues *TAS*'s misguided practice of belittling smoke sufferers and, while I would wish this affliction on no one (except maybe those on P.J. O'Rourke's Enemies List), be assured that if Mr. Caldwell would experience only a day or so of the intense disabling sinus and head pain induced in some people by second-hand cigarette, cigar, or pipe smoke, he would then have all of the insight and qualifications—indeed, all the necessary inspiration—to write a refutation of his own article. (And please don't take my word on this—ask other sufferers.)

Of all publications, *TAS* ought to recognize that smoking is an intrusive act that should be subject to the same kind of civilized constraints as there are on those who, say, wish to swing their fists.

—E. Martin
Williamsburg, Virginia

. . . As a scientist, I also oppose the use, quite common it seems, of factual data skillfully misinterpreted or incompletely reported to support the preconceived notions and biases of those who interpret or report them.

Thus, the article "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" attracted my attention. The article

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begs the question, "What is the hidden agenda behind the insistence of those who abhor 'passive smoke'?" The hidden agenda, quite simply, is that smoking is profoundly annoying to non-smokers. In short, it stinks. In deference to the comment attributed to Stanton Glantz, our concerns need not be "legitimized." They are intrinsically legitimate. We are annoyed by the noxious fumes that we often cannot avoid in public places. We are annoyed by the smoker's insistence on the quiet enjoyment of his habit, at the expense of our quiet enjoyment of an expensive restaurant meal, airline transportation, or any of a variety of other endeavors during which we may be involuntarily seated near him. . . . I am not in the least concerned about contracting pulmonary adenocarcinoma by exposure to passive cigarette smoke. I am concerned about the liberal behavior of those who smoke publicly, in disregard of others' comfort. You may question my description of this as "liberal behavior." That label is demanded by RET's conclusion in *The Liberal Crack-Up* (page 223) that, fundamentally, liberals feel "enjoined by high principle to disturb their neighbors." You see, if I persist in poking the smoker in the ribs with my index finger, that is an unconscionable intrusion upon his right to quiet enjoyment. If he is my neighbor and I persistently intrude upon his environment with the noise from my parties or my stereo, that is "disturbing the peace." But if he persistently intrudes upon my enjoyment of a smokeless environment on an airplane, I am diminishing his "personal liberty" by objecting. I fail to see the logical difference.

The smokers have none but each other to blame. . . .

—John M. Turnbow, M.D.
Lubbock, Texas

I think Christopher Caldwell missed the point. I don't have any love for the dictatorial fiats generated by the EPA, but I consider myself somewhat of a nonsmoking activist. As an engineer, I have no respect for bad science either. But, like so many other subjects that have become politicized, the EPA is reacting to smoking with a backlash mentality. People who smoke seem to be a somewhat inconsiderate breed, at least as a group. If I chewed tobacco, and I came into a restaurant and spit into your water glass or onto your plate, the management would at the very least ask me to leave. Yet smokers seem to believe that they have the "right" to smoke anywhere and anytime that they please, without regard to anyone around them. . . . If, for the last ten years, smokers had taken their habit outside restaurants and other public places, the ecoidiots at the EPA would probably not be using pseudoscience to force the issue.

—Stuart R. Ball
Yukon, Oklahoma

Common Cents

Regarding the June 1992 *American Spectator* article, "Common Sense 1992": I'm not certain whether Michael Ledeen is pulling our leg. . . . The 50 percent of the bureaucracy that would be sacked under his plan "will be guaranteed full salary (complete with step increases) until retirement age, and the pension [each worker] would have received had he continued in his job." Thus, a displaced 28-year-old GS-12 making $40,000 per annum with five years on the job has a lifetime guarantee of not only his $40K per year but step increases, cost-of-living increases (each October 1), and full pension.

Seem excessive? Don't worry. You see, Mr. Ledeen writes, most of the sacked federal troughers, "given the Calvinistic angst that drives most Americans," will choose to work and take a job that pays less than their former government posts. In which case, Mr. Ledeen would pay them the difference between their former federal employment and the jobs most would . . . subsequently take.

Calvinistic angst? In the federal bureaucracy?! If John Calvin himself had been offered that deal, he'd have spent his life windsurfing on Lake Geneva. . . .

Please don't think that I miss or am unappreciative of Mr. Ledeen's central point. Our bureaucracy is as bloated as Jaba the Hut, and if the electorate's unrealistic expectations of being aggrandized by federal programs were commensurately diminished, government could indeed be downsized by 50 percent, maybe much more. Considering the deleterious effects interloping bureaucrats and the

(continued on page 63)

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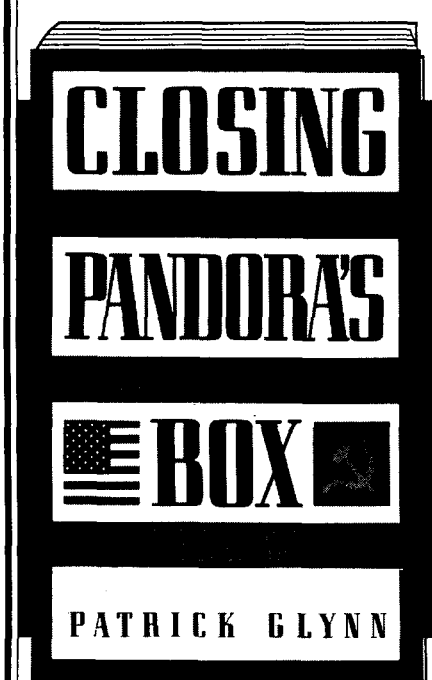

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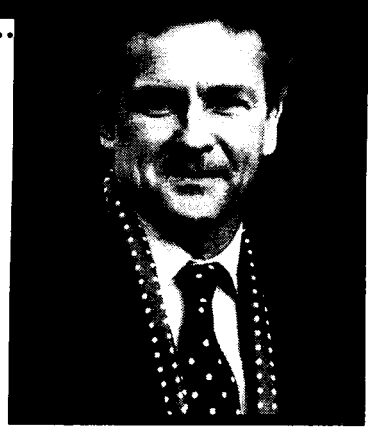


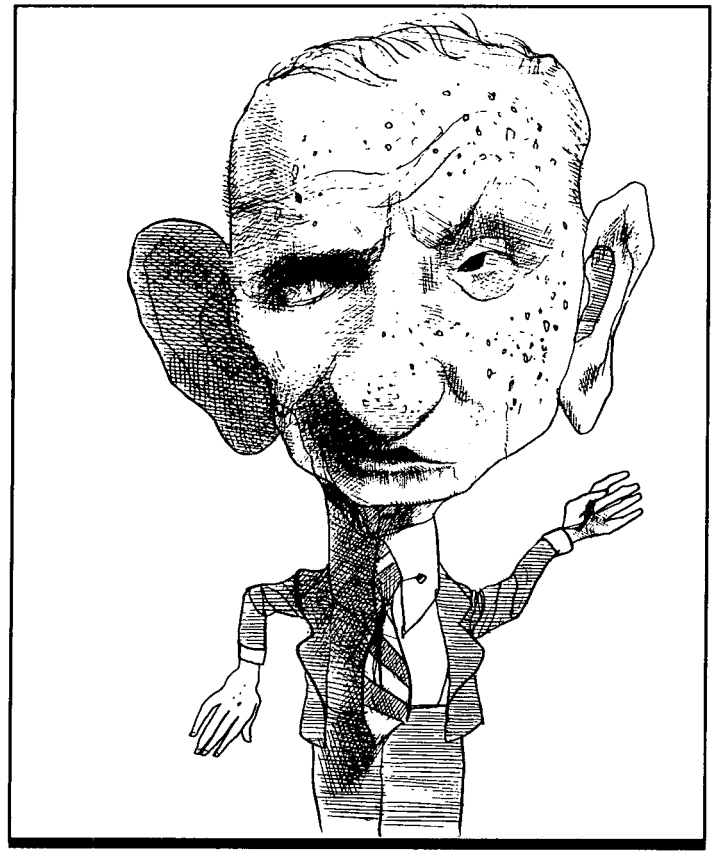
Just Whistle

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

On the day that the morning news shows broadcast word of H. Ross Perot's historic leap to the top of the presidential polls, there was an excitement fevering the reporters that I had not witnessed since the thrilling era of Watergate. Hey, ho, we've cornered another President in the White House. Admittedly, this time the scoundrel sweating it out over at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue is not a "crook" or a liar or a killer of innocent Vietnamese. In fact, it is not clear what the President is, but he is getting nailed by Mr. H. Ross Perot, and it is not clear what Mr. Perot is either—aside from rich.

I think it can be said that, in this presidential campaign, the less we know about a candidate the more we like him. Certainly I like Mr. Perot, and what I know about him is his personal wealth and little else. Consider Governor Bill Clinton. We know a great deal about him, and he finished a distant third in the *Washington Post*–ABC Poll. My advice to him is that he say not one more word until November 3. Playing the saxophone on the Arsenio Hall show the other night was an excellent start.

They say that music is a universal language, and my advice to Governor Clinton is that he emulate Harry Truman's 1948 whistle-stop campaign, and at every stop just whistle. That will warm up the crowd, and when the press's questioning begins, Boy Clinton can bring out his sax. His voice has suffered horribly during the campaign, and what he has said has done him no good. Political analysts tell us that the American people are impatient with candidates who "play politics as usual" with the voters. How about one who plays the saxophone? At presidential debates, while Bush and Perot sputter, cool Bill will wail or bee-bop. Photo ops will show him lulling street gangs into serenity with his groovy instrument. He can play at parades, political rallies, and on behalf of local officeholders. In this year of public anger, we have been told many times that presidential candidates "lie and cheat" their way into the White House. Bill Clinton can be the first to play a musical instrument into the White House. After all, it is an odd year.



Mr. Perot has risen faster than any third party candidate in history, and he has risen higher than any third party candidate in over fifty years. What is more he has no party and, thus far, no candidacy, and he is not even a politician. Every other third-party presidential candidate has at least been a politician. Mr. Perot boasts that he is not, and that he has no ax to grind. All other third-party candidates were stupendous ax-grinders. All have based their candidacies on a deep vein of sentiment and, occasionally, ideas. In 1912 Theodore Roosevelt based his candidacy on a well-developed body of ideas called "progressivism." In 1948 Henry Wallace and Strom Thurmond based their candidacies on left-wing radicalism and states' rights, respectively. The 1968 presiden-

(continued on page 14)

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Times *column syndicated by King Features.*

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tial campaign of George Wallace was based on populism and race. Even John Anderson's 1980 candidacy was based on a body of ideas best characterized as Country Club Republicanism.

The Perot candidacy, we are told, is based on anger—not his but the public's. Unfortunately for Mr. Perot, it is not clear what the public is angry about, or what they would have him do to dispel their bilious mood. The polling data, we are told, favor Mr. Perot over President Bush, but the polling data were wrong in 1980, misleading for months in 1988, and completely erroneous in the British elections as recently as last April. Public moodiness and shaky numbers are not for me.

When I am forced to choose between polls and historic precedent I choose historic precedent. America is at peace. Forty years of living in fear of nuclear holocaust is over. The economy is improving from a shallow if protracted recession. The most pleasant weather of the year is upon us. My guess is that by the end of the summer our spirits will have improved markedly and so will the President's fall prospects. Incidentally, he has as fine a foreign policy team as any President in years. Oddly, James Baker, Richard Cheney, Brent Scowcroft, and Robert Gates have a shrewder grasp of domestic politics than the President's domestic political advisers. Perhaps one of them could take over the campaign and tell us a little more about George Bush, but only a little, and who's that guy playing sax? ❐

The Real Enemy

There is trouble in Hollywood. I do not refer to the recent Los Angeles riots, whose origins remain the staple of prolonged media meditations and whose burned-out buildings crumble on every block. Nor do I refer to the sickly panhandlers, whole families of whom clutter the streets, nor the street hoodlums. True, these grisly phenomena make Hollywood a surprisingly unhappy place, but now there is a deeper cause for angst. Hollywood's eminentoes comprise a relatively small community—perhaps a thousand or so wheeler-dealers, writers, and winsome faces—and now someone has ratted.

A few months ago, the *New York Times* sent an accomplished reporter, Alessandra Stanley, to chronicle the political and artistic diversity of Hollywood. There is none. Stanley interviewed widely and came away with tales of intolerance and—get this—fear. Her report in the Sunday *New York Times* leaves readers with the impression that Hollywood is as provincial and politically conformist as ever it was during the days of the infamous "blacklist." Consequently, the day after its appearance, Hollywood smoldered with righteous indignation.

Quite by accident, the week before Stanley's piece appeared I was conducting my own private zoological expedition in the fabled preserves of the Hollywoodians. It is true that the place is as devoid of political or intellectual diversity as, say, Harvard Law School. There are, to be sure, a handful of conservatives numbered among the stars—including Arnold Schwarzenegger, Charlton Heston, and Tom Selleck, who told Stanley that he is "frustrated" by the "narrow parameters of political correctness." There are some gifted filmmakers, such as Lionel Chetwynd, of *Hanoi Hilton* and *To Heal a Nation*. But then there is the contented herd of antediluvian lefties whose ambience is always as repressed as a Victorian's garden party. Essaying the dreary scene, Stanley writes "There are many . . . people in the entertainment industry who say they do not feel free to express their views."

So why is Hollywood troubled by this newspaper article? Who doubts that Hollywood is as politically correct as a Bible Belt seminary is fundamentalist? Hollywood movies abound with rapacious capitalists, brutal and devious men, sexual wackos—in sum, the same tortured figures I met in Hollywood. Then there are the movies about the CIA waging tireless war against democracy and the military scheming to keep us all in uniform. Surely there are other themes that might amuse America. Lionel Chetwynd told Stanley of his attempt to produce a World War II portrayal of Canadian soldiers volunteering for a dangerous mission against the Nazis. "So who's the enemy?" a highly placed network executive asked. "Well, Hitler," Chetwynd replied. "No, no, the *real* enemy," she yawped.

That is about the level of ratiocination I found. There is a rude innocence about the place. An astonishingly high percentage of Hollywoodians profess allegiance to the noble causes of the moment, but none that I met was capable of defending a cause beyond echoing a bumper sticker or heaving off the exhortatory yell of a cheerleader. Conversation in Hollywood, even at the most elegant dinner table, even at the most solemn fundraiser, seems to amount to nothing more than an exchange of aggressive wisecracks punctuated by moments of sentimental slop. Not much of intelligence is heard.

There is almost as much politics in Hollywood as sex and power, but it is politics of an infantile variety. It is not the politics of Hollywood's great days, the late 1930s, for instance, when a producer like Jack Warner recognized the world-wide impact his films might have, and weighed his political values with the utmost seriousness. It is not the politics of men and women who became self-proclaimed socialists or "one-worlders" and understood what these terms meant. Today politics in Hollywood means slavishly supporting each noble cause—homelessness, the rain forests, AIDs—whether they have anything of substance in common or not.

And one dare not step out of line. Denzel Washington, who plays Malcolm X in a Spike Lee epic, has stepped out of line. He is reluctant to do nude scenes. Alessandra Stanley tells us he is now suspected of being conservative. Is he one of the Hollywoodians of independent mind who ratted to her? Perhaps he is just inordinately chill-prone. ❐

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De Soto in Peru

by Tom Bethell

Over the years, America has sent any number of sociologists and anthropologists abroad to study foreign societies. Few with any wisdom have come here to study ours. One was Alexis de Tocqueville in the 1840s; another was the Peruvian Hernando de Soto in the 1980s, suitably named after the explorer who discovered the Mississippi River. Having attended a Swiss boarding school in the 1950s, De Soto was puzzled by this question: Why was Western Europe so much richer than South America? As he had observed at his polyglot school, Europeans were not noticeably more intelligent than Latins. Obviously there was some important but undisclosed difference in the way their respective societies were organized. What was it?

De Soto published some of his findings in *The Other Path* (1989), pointing out that most Peruvians were mired in a legal morass protecting traditional elites and making enterprise impossible. An informal entrepreneur took 289 days to register his business legally, for example. A large section of the population was prevented from operating legally within the economy, and the same was true all over Latin America.

De Soto gave several talks in Washington at the time, telling audiences how he had interviewed U.S. officials, only to find that they had little idea how their own system worked. "The institutions underlying the success of the American market system and the genuine participation of Americans in their own governance were constructed over 200 years," he later wrote in the *New York Times*. "So unnoticed has this process been that Americans have taken it for granted, losing their ability to recognize and teach the importance of these institutions and failing to incorporate them into their foreign policies." The West "never preserved a blueprint of its own evolution," De Soto told me recently. "The proof is that every time you are asked how you do it, by the Poles or by the Russians, you don't really know what to tell them."

He returned from Washington to the Peruvian maelstrom: a world of 23 million people, mostly impoverished; coca growers furnishing two-thirds of the world's supply of the raw material for cocaine; drug traffickers working in league with 10,000 or so Shining Path terrorists led by a Communist philosophy professor (a Kantian, I'm told); a government accustomed to act as the private instrument of Peruvian elites, protecting them from competition; a world of curfews, power cuts, and corrupt judges; a government impoverished by its own partiality; and an unreliable army, uncertain whether it should be on the side of its own people or the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency. The U.S. is in a position to call the shots in Peru, as in so many foreign countries, by threatening to close the foreign-aid spigot. Impoverished armies like their own people, but they also like getting paid.

For sixteen months, De Soto worked as an adviser to the Peruvian president, Alberto Fujimori. For reasons that are not entirely clear, he quit at the end of January. Then, in April, Fujimori dissolved the country's legislature and arrested its politicians, saying that "the country cannot continue to be weakened by terrorism, drug trafficking, and corruption." The United States condemned as "unconstitutional" this attack on "democracy," and responded with an aid boycott, stopping $167 million en route to Lima and prevailing on European donors to cut off their support as well.

Before and after the coup, De Soto pointed out that most Latin American countries, Peru included, merely create institutional facades labeled along Western lines. Latinate legislative and judicial branches, political parties, Treasury Departments, and Reserve Banks promise more than they deliver and sound more democratic than they are. But they thrill the U.S. State Department, no doubt flattered by the imitation. Mechanisms that make public agencies somewhat accountable to the people here—De Soto mentions public participation in rulemaking, openness to media scrutiny—are nowhere to be found in their Latin imitations.

This has made possible a vast and endless corruption, with a privileged few able to privatize what is laughably called foreign "investment." De Soto told a recent hearing of the U.S. Joint Economic Committee that "some governments are suspected of paying as much as double the true dollar value of the capital investment projects for which they contract." Local budget committees exempted from scrutiny cook up projects tied to particular suppliers without competitive bids or publication in any Federal Register. But as long as there's a "legislative branch" and a "judiciary," don't worry, it's a democracy and therefore aid-worthy. Now Fujimori has slapped handcuffs on the pols, but it's not clear that the country is any less democratic as a result.

The truth is that "democracy" is not really helpful in analyzing the problem of economic development. If it merely legitimizes a system of rotating theft, with fat hogs turned out and lean hogs admitted in their place, it is worse than useless. De Soto himself uses and defends the term, but he seems to mean by it something rather differ-

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ent—institutions that spontaneously arise at the grass-roots level. In the last couple of years, meanwhile, he and his assistants at the Institute for Liberty and Democracy have undertaken some of the most important economic research ever done in the Third World, explaining as never before its persistent impoverishment.

Their key discovery is that most Peruvians do not have secure property rights. This is true of 60 percent of the people in the cities, 92 percent in the countryside, De Soto says. They have property of a sort, but it is not registered. This reduces most "owners" to the status of squatters: permanently at risk of eviction, seizure, or inundation by a new wave of squatters. In such a world, long-range enterprise cannot be undertaken and inhabitants tend either to be scorned as "lazy" or (worse in De Soto's view) praised as members of an "indigenous culture" that is nobler and less materialistic than ours.

Property registers do exist, and property can be made secure by law, but it has to be *enacted*, house by house. Titling and registration is a privileged preserve of a ruling lawyer-class. Over the decades they have managed to make the process so expensive and time-consuming that most people do not have access to it.

Peasants have "common law" property, De Soto says, meaning that local groups or villages respect each other's rights. But they cannot obtain credit on such unsecured land, and are always at the mercy of officialdom, against whom they have little recourse at law. President Fujimori did embrace De Soto's proposal to incorporate these informal arrangements into the law of the land by setting up a parallel system of registration. Once this is done, De Soto claims, hitherto insecure property doubles in value overnight.

The same problem exists all over Latin America, and indeed many parts of the Third World, De Soto says. His institute has carried out pilot programs in Ecuador and El Salvador, and has been invited also to Guatemala, Honduras, and Indonesia. The problem is that registering and titling property is very expensive; doing it for tens of thousands of people in several countries is a huge undertaking—more than one institute can possibly do. It is, however, one of the few ways in which foreign aid money might usefully be spent, and far from propping up existing kleptocracies (which foreign aid normally does) it will undermine them. In the years ahead, the willingness of aid agencies to commit money to this worthwhile cause will put to the test once and for all their professed concern for the poor.

These registration figures were not easy to come by, De Soto told me. Ask for official figures and you'll be told: "Look, 80 percent of homes here are titled." But is title uncontroversial? "Oh no, there are conflicting claims on 40 percent of property." Are squatter areas included? "Oh no, we don't count them. They are invaders." How long ago did they invade? "Fifty years ago, 120 years ago." You also have land reform areas. We understand that the people who live there have already parcelled it into private property. "Yes, that's right," they'll say, "but we don't count them because they're still under collective law." And so it goes.

Put all these exceptions back in, De Soto said, and you get back to the 92 percent figure. People living in the woods, in the Andes, in the Amazon basin, on the city outskirts, have been excluded from the count. "As far as titles go, most Latin Americans probably have them," De Soto added. "There's always been a dictator or a political candidate wanting to be elected and willing to shove paper around. But it's worthless paper—title that cannot be registered. There is no place where you can go and find someone with a map who is willing to testify that there are not four other people with the same piece of paper giving them title to the same piece of land."

I have not heard of any research or investigation comparable to this since foreign aid began in 1949 with President Truman's Point Four program. One reason is that early foreign aid teams aimed to *expropriate* property (from "absentee landlords"), and then set about herding peasants into collectives created on the stolen land. This was done in El Salvador with U.S. assistance as recently as 1984. The idea that property should be made *more* secure would have been thought very reactionary. Also, foreign aid has always been aid to governments—not people. American aid officials abroad simply would not have been bold enough, or motivated enough, or armed with enough local information, to question official statistics and come up with their own. De Soto's people could do it because they are Peruvians working in Peru.

As for the coca growers: There are 250,000 of them and they are a part of the great majority with insecure, unregistered property, forced into what we call the underground economy. To them, the appeal of coca is that it grows easily, without much preparation of the soil. If attacked by army units, the growers move on to new terrain. Such attacks are bound to be indiscriminate, since without property there are no addresses, De Soto points out, and without addresses, police operations necessarily become army operations. "Without addresses, there can be no such thing as police." A government that wants to lay down the law then finds itself at war with a whole class of people—an attack upon one is construed as an attack upon all. "That's how all the Vietnams have gotten started," De Soto said. Whereupon Shining Path (Viet Cong in Vietnam) are welcomed as defenders by those under attack.

Growers earn little from cocaine—perhaps $500 a year. (The real money is in trafficking.) They would be happy to switch to more lucrative crops, such as coffee or cocoa. But these need more in the way of investment, and without property rights it isn't worth their while to substitute. But the growers have signed agreements with the government expressing their willingness to switch—in return for property that is titled and registered. Using what he likes to call "class analysis," De Soto persuaded Fujimori that the growers should meanwhile be decriminalized. As long as they were treated as criminals, they were de facto allies of the Shining Path.

"We just finished a pilot program," De Soto said. "Wherever we titled and registered, the Shining Path left." The underground newspaper of the Shining Path complained in 1990 that De Soto's organization was "distancing young people from participating in the popular war," and in April 1991, the Institute for Liberty and Democracy's building in Lima was bombed. De Soto had left ten minutes earlier. He has since been told by U.S. officials that he is number one on Shining Path's hit list. Now he has round-the-clock security. ❐

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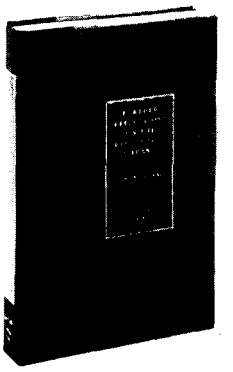

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The BNL Scandal

And how the Iran-contra investigation gave carte blanche *to Saddam Hussein.*

by James Ring Adams

A sultry Georgia weekend was just half an hour away for the staff on Friday, August 4, 1989. The branch manager had just started his summer vacation and the number two man was still away on his, so the sixteen clerks and traders in Suite 2000 of Atlanta's Peachtree Center Gas Light Tower were spending their time watching the clock. At 4:30 p.m., the door burst open.

A line of FBI agents and Federal Reserve Bank examiners, maybe fifty in all, filed quickly into the office and ordered employees not to touch their desks. For the next hour none of the staff could leave the office, make phone calls, or go to the bathroom without an escort. As the staff looked on, not entirely in disbelief, the agents lifted armloads of files from the filing cabinets and dumped them into cartons. The Feds swept papers off desks, rifled through drawers, and even checked the women's purses. They questioned members of the staff. Only at 5:45 did they begin to let them leave, one at a time.

The sudden raid on the Atlanta office of the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro kicked off a scandal that Democrats now hope will finish off the Bush Administration, for BNL was the financial linchpin of a global network that for the better part of a decade had been supplying Iraq's Saddam Hussein with the makings of poison gas plants, nuclear bombs, and missiles capable of reaching Cairo, Tehran, and all of Israel. More than $2 billion of this lethal arsenal had been financed by the American taxpayer.

Even before the 1992 presidential campaign turned into a three-cornered

James Ring Adams is the co-author of A Full-Service Bank: How BCCI Stole Billions Around the World *(Pocket Books) and author of* The Big Fix: Inside the S&L Scandal *(Wiley).*

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contest, the scandal was a godsend to those who want to end Republican control of the White House. It undercuts the great triumph of the Bush Administration, Operation Desert Storm, by raising the question of whether the Gulf War was necessary. Since February, congressional probers have published document after classified document detailing cabinet-level coddling of Saddam Hussein in the two years between the end of his war with Iran and his invasion of Kuwait. Is it a big scandal? No question. The Gulf War cost $60 billion, and if earlier restrictions on Iraq would have saved even the modest number of allied casualties, then the Bush Administration committed appeasement of the worst sort. But was it criminal? That is a more complicated question than Congress is likely to admit.

Four of the five congressional committees on the case think they've seen enough to call for a special prosecutor. The House Judiciary Committee heard them out at the end of May and is holding more hearings before deciding whether to forward the request to the Attorney General. The pathetic performance of Republicans in opposition suggests that the motion will pass with substantial support.

Yet there is a standing warning of the folly of making a police matter out of foreign policy disputes, and that is the career of the existing Iran-contra special prosecutor. Long after his big cases were overturned on appeal, Lawrence Walsh drags out his tenure, with total expenses far exceeding the sums diverted in the scandal. His current efforts are devoted to harassing senior officials far removed from the original offense. His latest target, former defense secretary Caspar Weinberger, was actually one of the most vehement opponents of the arms-for-hostages deal with Iran. He was indicted because he didn't tell Congress, or the independent counsel, about his personal note-taking in administration meetings. The upshot of it all has been to silence any career bureaucrat who might have opposed the tilt to Iraq.

Before we go that road again, let's separate the scandal from the crimes. There were crimes. Six defendants in the BNL case have already pled guilty. But did the government sponsor the illegalities, and even more, is it now trying to cover them up?

I. Rogue Bankers and the Pariah State

The bankers at BNL-Atlanta quickly learned that they were in over their heads, but it began innocently enough in December 1984. Branch manager Christopher Drogoul, a slim, French-educated native of New Jersey whose father was part-Lebanese, had an introduction to two Iraqi bankers who had come to the U.S. to arrange financing for their grain imports. Drogoul had already handled grain export deals for other countries, and he knew the ins and outs of the Agriculture Department's Commodity Credit Corporation. The CCC was set up to boost farm exports by putting an American government guarantee behind private bank loans; the bank would lend directly to a foreign importer, confident that if the loan went bad, the taxpayer would cover 98 percent of the loss. After an evening with the Iraqis at the New York Sheraton, Drogoul and his second man Paul von Wedel came away with a contract for a $100 million line of credit. Their superiors in Rome approved the deal and the U.S. was happy. Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz had just met with Ronald Reagan in the White House.

By the middle of 1985, Iraq wanted another $500 million, and Drogoul was glad to do the business. But problems cropped up in Rome. Iraq and Italy were squabbling over the non-delivery of a fleet of warships. Italy wouldn't let them go, or refund the down payment, so Iraq stopped paying its own debts to Italy. In these circumstances, the state-owned bank couldn't give written approval for the loans from Atlanta.

Western intelligence concluded that the Badush Dam was the cover for Special Project 395, Iraq's attempt to develop a missile capable of striking at a range of 1,000 kilometers, a radius that would dominate most of the Middle East.

But Drogoul went ahead anyway, for a total of nearly $2 billion in commodity loans. In the meantime, Iraq's credit rating took a nosedive and respectable lenders, like Morgan Guaranty, quietly dropped their business with the country. By January 1987, BNL-Atlanta was the only bank in the world willing to finance Iraq under the CCC program.

So far, the Atlanta bankers could tell themselves they were helping to save American farms and providing humanitarian aid to Iraqi civilians. True, there were rumors that Iraq was playing games with the grain pricing, raking cash off the top and demanding "after-sale services," i.e., kickbacks from its suppliers. But that was a problem for the Agriculture Department auditors. Drogoul soon took a step, however, that lifted BNL-Atlanta to a new level of complicity.

In February 1988, Drogoul brought von Wedel on a business trip to Baghdad. At their hotel, their host Sadiq Taha of Iraq's Central Bank astonished von Wedel by announcing they would be signing an agreement for a medium-term loan.

"Oh, didn't I tell you?" Drogoul innocently asked von Wedel. He had agreed to move from grain deals into financing an Iraqi dam project. Von Wedel claims he was totally surprised, but he was savvy enough in the ways of Iraq to locate the hidden police camera and microphone in his room's television set and drape a towel over the screen. After three days of negotiations, von Wedel was just beginning to relax when a supposedly chance encounter rattled him once more. Just as the two bankers entered the hotel lobby in the evening, a familiar voice said, "But Mr. Drogoul, does your boss know you are here?" It

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was the BNL officer from Rome in charge of Middle East lending.

"In the seven years that I had known Chris," said von Wedel, "this was the first time he was completely speechless." Drogoul spoke privately with the man from headquarters and told von Wedel that the officer agreed in principle with the deal. By the time of the signing ceremony, von Wedel's nerves were completely shot. As he walked into the office of the Minister of Trade, he recalled, "I thought I had crashed a cocktail party at a terrorist convention. All these short guys with black moustaches wearing army fatigues and carrying guns were standing around with drinks in their hands having a good old time."

Von Wedel had better reason than he knew to be nervous when the minister announced that most of the loan would help build the Badush Dam near Mosul. Western intelligence later concluded that the Badush Dam was the cover for Special Project 395, Iraq's attempt to develop a missile capable of striking at a range of 1,000 kilometers, a radius that would dominate most of the Middle East.

The raid on BNL-Atlanta had created a major inconvenience for the pro-Iraq policy of the Bush Administration. But it could have been just an inconvenient coincidence.

The "Badush Dam" loans grew rapidly. From an initial $200 million, they reached a total of $2.2 billion by April 1989. Unlike the grain loans, which were funneled through the Central Bank of Iraq, the dam loans entailed BNL's writing letters of credit directly to Iraq's suppliers, including some of the largest corporations in America. Drogoul and von Wedel began to hobnob in the highest reaches of Iraqi government. On a later trip to Baghdad, they met the head of the Technical Corps for Special Projects, the group that, among other things, built the Scud missile that killed twenty-seven members of the Pennsylvania National Guard in Dhahran. They drank orange juice in the tightly guarded office of Hussein Kamel Hassan, head of Iraq's crash program to build military industry and the son-in-law of Saddam Hussein himself. They toured the Badush Dam site itself, with its jumble of heavy machinery, and heard the local Bedouin shepherds complain that the Vietnamese workers kept stealing their herd dogs for dinner.

The BNL staff also began working with an Iraqi outfit called the Technology and Development Group (TDG). (A member of the TDG board, Fadel Kadhum, had roomed with Drogoul at the University of Montpellier in France.) TDG bought a failing British machine tool company and renamed it Matrix-Churchill Ltd., which in turn set up an American subsidiary in the Cleveland suburb of Solon, Ohio. With BNL funding, Matrix-Churchill became the hub of the Iraqi procurement network in the U.S.

Scarcely a week after the loan signing at von Wedel's "terrorist convention," requests for BNL financing began to issue from the nondescript Matrix-Churchill building in Ohio. One of its early orders included a high-precision tungsten carbide grinder suitable for making parts for missiles and nuclear components. The firm coordinated the building of a fiber glass plant in Iraq with an output applicable to missile rocket casings. Most of these deals were disguised as "dual use" exports, ostensibly for peaceful use but easily converted to the military. The BNL turned down one Matrix-Churchill request to finance "nuclear triggers"; the Iraqis quickly learned to use a more generic description.

The staff in Solon acted as advance men for touring Iraqis. In August 1988, a telex from the Technical Corps for Special Projects–Project 395 told its Cleveland outpost to set up appointments with nineteen corporations for the Badush project; the list, complete with contact names and phone numbers, included several divisions of the Dresser Corporation, Mack Trucks Inc., Caterpillar Tractor, Ingersoll Rand, Dynapac Manufacturing, General Motors-Canada, and Terex. These were heavy-hitters, some of them Fortune 500 companies, and they were happy to do the business.

In the meantime, Drogoul's staff was scrambling to raise money for the Iraqi loans and to hide the business from their auditors. Both jobs were surprisingly easy. BNL had a top credit rating, thanks to its Italian government backing, and America's biggest banks were eager to lend it billions. Drogoul's secretaries recorded these loans in "grey books," which they kept on the side. The Iraqi loan files went into "floating bankers' boxes," which frequently wound up in Drogoul's car or von Wedel's garage. After meetings with the company auditor, Drogoul would sometimes burst into von Wedel's office, doubled over with laughter over another narrow escape.

"Chris, do you really feel invincible?" von Wedel asked him once.

"No," he answered, "but close to it."

Drogoul had more trouble handling the churning jealousies of his own staff. As his employees caught on to the Iraqi operation, they began to hint for favors. Drogoul doled out company cars and cash bonuses to keep them quiet. But women were his downfall. He spent his weekends doing housework for his wife and two children, but he kept falling into affairs at the office. Von Wedel once caught him necking in the parking garage with one secretary, and a former girlfriend, still on the staff, set out to make her life miserable. The spurned lover started by gluing together the pages of her rival's desk calendar and ended up by calling the FBI.

Drogoul, some staff, a Turkish trading company, and

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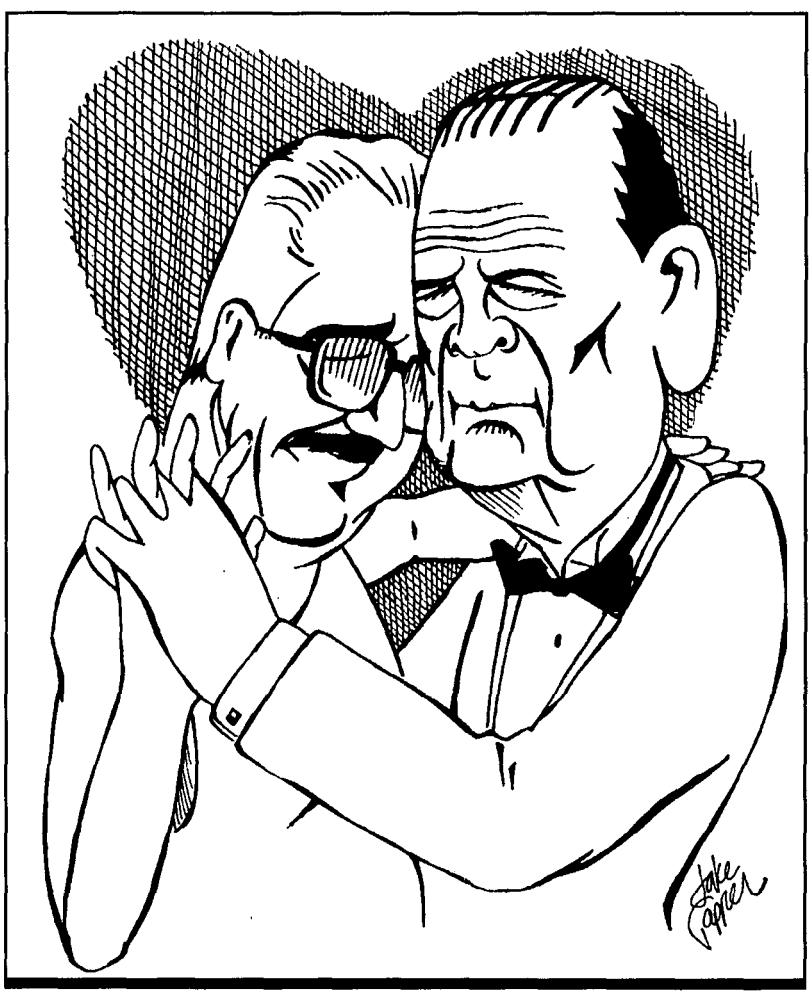
four Iraqis were eventually indicted for bank fraud, namely for hiding the unauthorized loans from BNL headquarters and from American bank examiners. But the case raised a question that still hasn't been answered: Was Drogoul operating on his own, or did he have tacit approval, either from his superiors or from one or more Western governments? Von Wedel certainly worried enough about it, and Drogoul and von Wedel took substantial gifts for their work. One grain broker paid for von Wedel's house. And Drogoul's father Pierre was in on the action, as a business partner with Iraqi procurement agents. The "rogue banker" theory certainly played well with the BNL hierarchy, and the U.S. prosecutors bought it.

But nagging facts kept cropping up. The Atlanta office always assumed Drogoul had a wink and a nod from Rome, and other branches sometimes sent in business just as unauthorized as their own. Senior auditors from Rome visited other American branches, but never Atlanta. And, contrary to the BNL's claim, it wasn't true that the fraud was undetectable. On a late-1990 trip to Washington, an Italian parliamentary commission was astonished to be told by a Federal Reserve examiner that the hidden funds could have been detected by anyone who knew where to look.



The official, a Mr. Martinson, told the commission that BNL-Atlanta transferred its funds, even the illicit Iraqi payments, through its correspondent bank, Morgan Guaranty Trust, and that all of these transfers, thousands of them, were meticulously recorded. Furthermore, the way the money was borrowed on the financial markets to fund the Iraqi loans could be reconstructed from the brokers' statements. In sum, the whole clandestine movement of money in and Iraqi loans out was waiting to be discovered in the bank's open records.

This revelation differed so drastically from the testimony of the BNL management that the commission at first didn't believe it. But as the senators went through the actual documents, with "transfers in the trillions of lire . . . all noted down to the last centesimo," they found that the Fed couldn't be doubted. It profoundly changed their outlook on the scandal.

Incredibly, twelve separate audits, by BNL officials, the Peat Marwick accounting firm, and federal and Georgia state bank examiners, failed to pick up the telltale movements in the Morgan Guaranty account. The senators concluded that incompetence alone couldn't explain it. There must have been collusion at higher levels. The commission launched into some dark speculation. The Atlanta branch, it noted, was opened by a bank officer who "moved in politico-military circles in the United States and other NATO countries." Senior American officials had ties of unknown significance to the banks in the case. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and present National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft had served as consultants to the BNL. More curiously, present Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger had been an adviser to the Ljubljanska Bank in Yugoslavia, which served as one of Chris Drogoul's main conduits and which, the commission said, hired the former BNL director for North America as a consultant at the behest of Drogoul's father. He also served on the board of directors of its American subsidiary, LBS Bank.

But Eagleburger vehemently denied any impropriety during recent testimony to the House Banking Committee. "While at Kissinger Associates, on the board of LBS Bank or elsewhere," he said, "I do not recall having done any substantive work for BNL."

The Italian commission didn't pursue these speculations much further. Wait and see, it said, as the investigations of the U.S. Congress revealed the extent of the administration's tilt toward Iraq in the late eighties. But the commission did reject emphatically the idea that Drogoul had embarked on this rogue adventure alone.

II. What Washington Was Doing

That Washington could have been involved in the BNL-Atlanta scam seems likely, given the record of its reaction to Drogoul's downfall. Mid-level civil servants at Treasury

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and Agriculture saw a megaton of bad publicity heading right for their desks and wanted to run for the shelters. It took lobbying from the cabinet and a Presidential National Security Directive to keep the credit flowing to Iraq.

The BNL raid couldn't have come at a worse time for aid to Iraq. Treasury bureaucrats had long worried about Saddam Hussein's credit rating, and the Export-Import Bank had already suspend its lending. (It had taken direct lobbying by then–Vice President George Bush to shake loose its last loan, in possible violation of the Ex-Im Bank charter.) The Commodity Credit program was up for renewal. Devastating memos began to circulate. "If smoke indicates fire," said one pungent essay dated October 13, 1989, "we may be facing a four-alarm blaze in the near future." This memo, a briefing paper for the State Department toured a horizon filled with warning flares. Ten separate investigations, it said, were targeting the BNL, and they "were at the explosion stage." Among the accusations:

•Iraq demanded kickbacks from its CCC suppliers, including trucks, spare parts, and other equipment.

•Grain under the CCC program may never have reached Iraq. Baghdad produced documents showing that shipments arrived there before other documents showed they had passed through interim ports in Jordan and Turkey. More likely, said Agriculture Department investigators, "commodities were bartered in Jordan and Turkey for military hardware."

•Some diverted funds, and possibly direct bank loans, were buying nuclear equipment.

•Iraq was making grain shippers pay substantial "consulting fees" to Matrix-Churchill in Ohio, possibly for military purchases.

•Then–U.S. attorney in Atlanta Robert Barr believed that Iraq "was malfeasant and involved" in the case.

(The memo was written by a State Department officer, Frank LeMay, who was new to the case; in a campaign to discredit the document, Agriculture Department investigators later testified to Congress that he misunderstood what they were telling him.)

The White House responded immediately. By the end of October 1989, President Bush had signed National Security Decision Directive 26, ordering federal agencies to *expand* their economic ties with Iraq. The *Forward*, the national Jewish weekly, has reported that NSDD 26 was drafted by James ("Jock") Covey, then acting assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs. Covey was one of six senior bureaucrats on the distribution list for the October 13 memo.

The use of NSDD 26 quickly became apparent. The supervisors of the Commodity Credit program were thoroughly rattled by the BNL raid. In late August, they voted to cut Iraq's annual share from $1 billion to $400 million. Iraq took this cutback seriously, far more seriously than anyone in the West realized. The grain credits had become almost its sole source of external borrowing. Even Saudi Arabia and Kuwait had cut it off. In the negotiations after the Gulf War, Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz claimed that the threat to end the commodity credit program helped trigger Saddam Hussein's decision to invade Kuwait.

This claim doesn't quite wash, because the credits didn't end, but Aziz had to work hard to save them. On October 6, 1989, he lobbied Secretary of State James Baker himself in a meeting at the State Department. He had learned of the cutback from the Iraqi agricultural team, he said, and he considered it a "setback." Iraq had no part, he said, in the BNL-Atlanta branch scandal, he said. His government, he added, "was very unhappy."

No matter what Whitley might do, the message sent by this stunning conflict of interest would crush anyone's morale. One has to wonder how it eluded the FBI check, the Justice Department, and Sen. Sam Nunn, who by tradition has veto power over U.S. attorney appointments in his state.

Secretary Baker caved in forthwith. With only a mild harrumph at Iraq's use of poison gas against the Kurds of Halabji, he sat through a tirade from Aziz about the BNL case. The bank was the problem, not the customer, said Aziz. Italy had said no Iraqis were involved, he claimed, and so did unidentified U.S. officials who had met with the governor of Iraq's Central Bank, the employer of Drogoul's contacts. Would Iraq cooperate with the investigation? Baker asked. "It would depend on the information," Aziz replied, but this matter had to be settled quickly. We'll see what can be done, Baker promised.

Baker delivered. The decision on the credits belonged to a National Advisory Council on International Monetary and Financial Policies. Normally the cabinet departments on the council, Treasury, State, and Commerce, would send mid-level delegates. But this issue was too hot for career bureaucrats, and they kicked it up to a meeting of political appointee–level deputies. State went to work on the other departments. Secretary Baker wrote to Agriculture Secretary Yeutter, asking for the full one billion, then followed up with a personal call. Deputy Secretary Eagleburger twisted arms at Treasury. Their ace in the hole was NSDD 26; the economic tie with Iraq was presidential policy.

The lobbying paid off. On November 8, the deputies to the Advisory Council approved the full one billion, in two installments of $500 million. By January, Iraq had spent most of the first tranche and started lobbying for the rest. On July 9, 1990, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq April Glaspie as-

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sured Baghdad officials that the second $500 million would soon be forthcoming. Critics have called this statement one of the "green lights" that encouraged Saddam Hussein to invade Kuwait on August 2. When the West struck back with an embargo, Saddam defaulted on his borrowing, sticking the U.S. taxpayer with nearly half a billion in claims. BNL itself is demanding repayment of $350 million.

III. The BNL Prosecution

Secretary Baker's behavior clearly implied that he would have preferred that Drogoul keep doing what he was doing. The raid on BNL-Atlanta had created a major inconvenience for the pro-Iraq policy of the Bush Administration. But it could have been just an inconvenient coincidence. Apart from the damage to the CCC program and the embarrassing revelations about Iraqi arms purchases, the incident need not have concerned the administration any further. If Drogoul had truly been a rogue acting from his own obscure motives, he could have gone to his fate without any interference from Washington. That is why the conduct of his prosecution raises questions as serious as the cabinet-level pressure for the commodity credits.

The government had its case within two hours of the August 4 raid. Von Wedel started talking freely almost as soon as the FBI agent showed up at his door at 5:30. He made a deal with the prosecutors shortly after. A January 9, 1990 letter signed by U.S. Attorney Barr anticipated an indictment in early February, and described a potential breakthrough: a Turkish broker in Istanbul, Yavuz Tezeller, was willing to talk about his substantial grain deals and kickbacks with both Christopher and Pierre Drogoul. "Tezeller's attorneys," wrote Barr, "also indicate he can provide information regarding 'after-sale services,' unearned consulting fees, and other payments to the Iraqis, as well as kickbacks paid by United States and multinational companies to obtain Iraqi contracts."

But by mid-summer, Barr was no longer the U.S. attorney for Atlanta. On August 3, 1990, almost the first anniversary of the raid, the U.S. Senate confirmed his successor, a private lawyer from Atlanta named Joe D. Whitley. Whitley came with an impressive résumé. Just a year earlier, he had been serving as the acting number-three man in the Justice Department. In that position, he had supervised the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the U.S. marshals, and the ninety-three U.S. attorneys. Then–Attorney General Richard Thornburgh had tried to talk him into staying as a member of his personal staff. But Whitley had said he wanted to go into private practice.

Whitley seemed like an outstanding choice for U.S. attorney, but he had one problem. He was the lawyer for Matrix-Churchill. Not just the Ohio subsidiary that was coordinating arms procurement in the U.S. but the British Matrix-Churchill that was fully owned by the Iraqi government. To be sure, the relationship for Whitley was purely commercial. Matrix needed a local attorney to enforce several BNL letters of credit once the trouble hit, and Whitley had joined one of the most prestigious local firms. But the association was a major embarrassment for the head of the office that would conduct the country's most important prosecution of the Iraqi arms procurement network. The credits that Whitley sued to collect were to buy machine tools for Iraq's Nassar Establishment for Mechanical Industries, an arm of the giant military-industrial complex at al-Taji. Among other items, al-Taji made rocket casings and centrifuge parts for the nuclear program. No matter what Whitley might do, the message sent by this stunning conflict of interest would crush anyone's morale. One has to wonder how it eluded the FBI check, the Justice Department, and Sen. Sam Nunn, who by tradition has veto power over U.S. attorney appointments in his state.

The appointment had a practical impact. Shortly after taking office, Whitley recused himself from the BNL case, transferring supervision to the number two in the office, who reported directly to main Justice. This move gave a meddling Washington even more control over the case. An internal Federal Reserve memo after Barr's departure had already complained of "what is perceived as interference from the Justice Department in Washington."

To many, the sure sign of this interference was the year-long delay in a BNL indictment. In spite of Barr's hope for charges by February 1990, the document was not finally handed up until January 1991, just as the ground war started in Iraq. Even then, it named only the Iraqis who had ac-

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tually signed the loan agreements. The list of unindicted co-conspirators included two Iraqi officers of Matrix-Churchill and Hussein Kamil Hassan, the son-in-law of Saddam Hussein.

On June 2, Chris Drogoul finally had his day in court. The first reports said that Drogoul would plead guilty to all 347 fraud counts and read a long statement explaining just what had gone on. Instead, he startled the court by taking a plea bargain and keeping his silence. The sudden clam-up visibly annoyed presiding judge Marvin Shoob, who had already said he didn't believe the rogue-banker theory. "Now he stands up before me and says he wants to work it out with the government prosecutors and tell me later," the judge said in court. "Without any reflection on the U.S. attorney, this case ought to have a special prosecutor."

IV. Special Prosecutor, Pro or Contra?

By historic coincidence, Judge Shoob spoke just as the House Judiciary Committee sat to hear four congressional committee chairmen call for an independent counsel. No one spoke with greater authority than House Banking Committee Chairman Henry Gonzalez, who had spent nearly two years trying to interest the public and the press in the BNL case. (The press "exposés" on the case relied almost entirely on documents that Chairman Gonzalez released from this February on in weekly floor speeches. It took the *Washington Post* several months to catch on, but that still scooped the *New York Times*, which didn't stumble on the story until four months after Gonzalez started his lectures, and then lamely explained that "no one was listening.") But even acknowledging the contribution of Congress and the many questions in this case, the specter of a special prosecutor still raises qualms.

What, after all, is the consequence of presenting this scandal as a crime? Scandalously stupid policies can occur without criminal intent, and the tilt toward Iraq is a prime example. The Reagan and Bush Administrations clearly appeased a nasty tyrant and paid the price with a war. They tolerated the use of chemical warfare and blinked at the build-up of a strategic nuclear industry. But these were bad policies, not crimes, and they thrived because our politics made crimes of a previous set of bad policies.

The Pro-Iraq scandal is a direct consequence of the criminalization of the Iran-contra affair, and the reason is that a court proceeding simply cannot cope with the real significance of either. These scandals are the neurotic symptoms of the American attempt to ignore one of the major wars of our generation, the eight-year conflagration between Iraq and Iran. Such a bloody conflict in an area of vital importance to the industrialized, oil-using world raised grave questions of what used to be called high policy. Should the U.S. try to shut down the war or prolong it? Should we tilt to one side or another, and how? What kind of power balance did we want to emerge at the end? The approach to some of these questions necessarily had to be covert, given the high emotions raised by the Ayatollah's revolution. None of them could be settled in a court of law.

The players in Iran-contra saw that it was important to reopen American channels to the Ayatollah's successors, that America and Iran are, as one analyst puts it, "natural allies." Much as the Ayatollah's provocations tried to obscure the fact, this nature sooner or later had to assert itself. Iran-contra quickly became a disaster, of course. The American weapons shipments that weren't bungled strengthened the wrong Iranian faction, and the basic point became lost in side issues.

When Robert McFarlane was hounded from the White House, the pro-Iraq tilt proceeded without opposition.

But the unleashing of the special prosecutor produced an even worse disaster. The criminal proceedings destroyed the careers of the pro-Iranian wing of our policy bureaucracy. When Robert McFarlane was hounded from the White House, the pro-Iraq tilt proceeded without opposition. The strongest voices against Saddam were discredited, and the attempt to control the export of dangerous technology was reduced to a guerrilla war fought from the bowels of the Pentagon.

Some of the pro-Iraqi excesses may indeed deserve to be prosecuted, but the most common charge is likely to be the Star Chamber offense of "misleading Congress." Not even a perjury charge, this somewhat arbitrary statute would be triggered if a witness managed to give Congress the wrong impression by his testimony. The intent of the law is worthy; Congress needs full information about policy to preserve popular control. The perverse result, however, as Michael Ledeen argues in *Perilous Statecraft*, his trenchant memoir of Iran-contra, is to cut off communication with the executive branch.

Another experience like Iran-contra would leave Washington in the condition of the Mingrelian royalty of the sixteenth century. Mingrelia is the region of the Caucasus that produced Lavrenti Beria. During its dynastic wars, the practice of the victor was to put out the eyes of the king who was overthrown. Since the factions were fairly evenly matched and the losers often made a comeback, for much of the century, all of the Mingrelian kings were blind.

Yes, there is the powerful smell of cover-up in the BNL case. The entire tilt toward Iraq needs to be exposed, regardless of the political consequences. If there has been obstruction of justice, take it to the courts. But the case needs a forum that can treat it as a policy issue, not as another vendetta. The purpose, after all, is to enlighten the citizenry, not to create the conditions for even worse policy in the future. ❐

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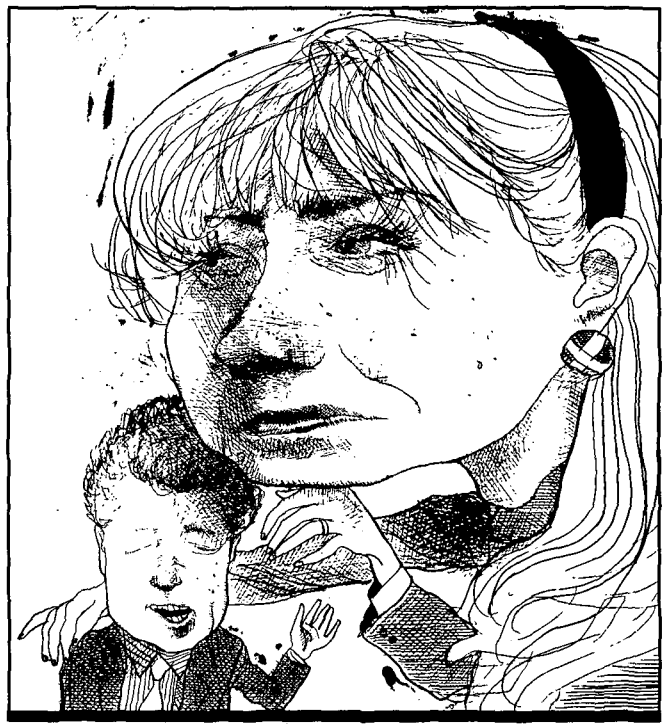
Daniel Wattenberg

The Lady Macbeth of Little Rock

Hillary Clinton's hard-left past and present.



Hillary Clinton has been likened to Eva Perón, but it's a bad analogy. Evita was worshipped by the "shirtless ones," the working class, while Hillary's charms elude most outside of an elite cohort of left-liberal, baby-boom feminists—the type who thought Anita Hill should be canonized and *Thelma and Louise* was the best movie since *Easy Rider*. Hillary reckons herself the next Eleanor Roosevelt. But, standing well to the left of her husband and enjoying an independent power base within his coalition, Hillary is best thought of as the Winnie Mandela of American politics. She has likened the American family to slavery, thinks kids should be able to sue their parents to resolve family arguments, and during her tenure as a foundation officer gave away millions (much of it in no-strings-attached grants) to the left—including sizable sums to hard-left organizers. She is going to cause her husband no end of political embarrassment between now and November—and who knows how long afterward.

By the morning of June 5, four top Clinton campaign aides—David Wilhelm, George Stephanopolous, Eli Segal, and Stanley Greenberg—had had enough of Susan Thomases and Harold Ickes, two ultra-liberal campaign aides who had fastened themselves to Hillary. According to a Clinton insider, the four had concluded that "Susan Thomases is running this campaign with Harold Ickes through Hillary," and gave Bill Clinton this ultimatum: "Either [Thomases] goes, or we're all going and *she* can run the campaign." Ever the Conciliator-in-Chief, Clinton managed to avert a mass resignation by the top echelon of his campaign staff. "They papered all this over for the time being, but it won't last," says the insider.

Thomases, a New York lawyer, is "the most doctrinaire liberal or old-line thinker around" the campaign, says a Clinton adviser. "Someone who just doesn't get any of the reform/New Covenant message." Ickes, son of Roosevelt's New Deal Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, is anathema to many centrist Democrats who rallied early to the Clinton candidacy. In 1988 he was Jesse Jackson's convention manager. In 1972, he was a key delegate selector for George McGovern, bending party rules to disestablish traditional Democratic constituencies—middle-class and socially conservative—in favor of student, feminist, and minority activists. A Clinton insider calls him "the most evil man on the face of earth," adding: "He has done more single-handedly to destroy the Democratic party than anyone else."

The immediate cause of the threatened walk-out was a national poll that the four, along with Frank Greer, had worked on with Thomases. When, despite opposition from Thomases, the others prepared to run the poll, Thomases

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complained to Hillary. The latter interceded with her husband, and the poll was killed. But the poll was small potatoes compared to the strategic coup that Hillary and her allies pulled off in blocking the move of Clinton's campaign headquarters from Little Rock to Washington, a move many considered inevitable after Clinton's victory in the New York primary. In Little Rock, lines of authority are fuzzy, and Hillary's temple dogs roam free. By keeping the campaign in Little Rock, they simultaneously froze out ideological adversaries linked to the centrist, Washington-based Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) and a group of seasoned national campaign professionals. "Hillary's probably the only person in this campaign who wanted it to be in Little Rock. The DLC crowd and the centrists—all of Washington—have basically been left high and dry," says a campaign source.

An influx of senior political talent would have left Mrs. Clinton's politically inept allies licking envelopes—Thomases is the political genius who guided Bill Bradley, a New Jersey institution since his All-America days at Princeton, to a 50-47 reelection squeaker over underfunded, unknown challenger Christine Todd Whitman in 1990. And moving the campaign to Washington would have meant more conventional wife-of duties for the gaffe-prone Hillary. "You bring it to Washington and the first thing you do is you get the Tom Donilons, the John Sassos, and all the grown-ups involved with real experience. They're going to—number one—kick out the Thomaseses and the Ickeses," explains an insider. "Number two, they're going to put Hillary in a very different position in the campaign."

Standing well to the left of her husband and enjoying an independent power base within his coalition, Hillary is best thought of as the Winnie Mandela of American politics.

Hillary Clinton's unfavorable poll ratings have risen as high as 29 percent in recent months. "Negatives" of 40 percent are generally fatal for a candidate; for a new-to-the-national-scene wife of a candidate, negatives in the 30 range are disastrous. The image of Mrs. Clinton that has crystallized in the public consciousness is, of course, that of Lady Macbeth: consuming ambition, inflexibility of purpose, domination of a pliable husband, and an unsettling lack of tender human feeling, along with the affluent feminist's contempt for traditional female roles.

Usually when a public figure develops a chronic image problem, it is the result of searching investigative reporting, leaks, revelations, scandal: Dan Quayle's National Guard service; John Tower's drinking and womanizing; Nancy Reagan's new china, borrowed designer gowns, and astrology. The surprising thing about Hillary's image problem is that it is self-generated. No one in the press has really scrutinized her twenty years of political activism in the far left border regions of the Democratic party. The only big scandal to blow in her direction concerned her errant husband, and that should have earned her general sympathy. The *New York Times* did do a page-one story about Hillary's involvement on behalf of a client with a case before the Arkansas Securities Commission. But that went right over most heads, and she was home free until Jerry Brown dinged her about it and she answered, infamously, "I suppose I could have stayed home and baked cookies and had teas."

Hillary Clinton is a self-detonating explosive. The condescending comments and snide innuendos that have landed her in such trouble (the Tammy Wynette crack, her insinuation in a *Vanity Fair* profile that Barbara Bush's husband was an adulterer too) have been *volunteered*. "She seems to be poised and intelligent," laments a Clinton adviser, "and yet she always seems to be one smart remark away from getting in trouble."

While Clinton has abandoned the husband-and-wife team presidency concept implicit in the slogan "Buy one, get one free," and while on-background speculation about cabinet posts for Hillary has been squelched, protecting the campaign from her bouts of public tactlessness remains "a continual topic of conversation day in and day out" within the campaign, according to one source. But how do you tell her to knock it off? Very carefully. "People who wrote memoranda which kind of gently raised that topic had them returned saying, 'You need to take those two paragraphs out, because Hillary will see them, and if she sees them, you'll be dead.' "

Centrist Democrats fear that internal advocates of a 34-percent strategy (placate the liberal base, concede the center) have found a powerful and untouchable champion in Hillary, guaranteeing continuing wrangling in the campaign. "There is a general notion below the surface of a 34-percent strategy, meaning go to the left and energize the base to win this thing, versus 51 percent," says an insider "There was always a marriage of expedience and principle in the DLC world: You had to get back the Reagan Democrats by going to the center. But the expedience and principle have been decoupled, because now the expedient may be to go for 34 percent."

Many in and around the campaign have the disquieting sense that Clinton is powerless to check his wife's growing influence because he needs her to fulfill the public role of forgiving wife standing by her man through marital vicissitudes. Could it be that Hillary is exploiting this unusual form of leverage to maximize her clout? A source replies, "It would be the first time I've heard that without an outright expletive in the sentence."

How could the party's moderate wing have signed on with such enthusiasm to a campaign that is penetrated at

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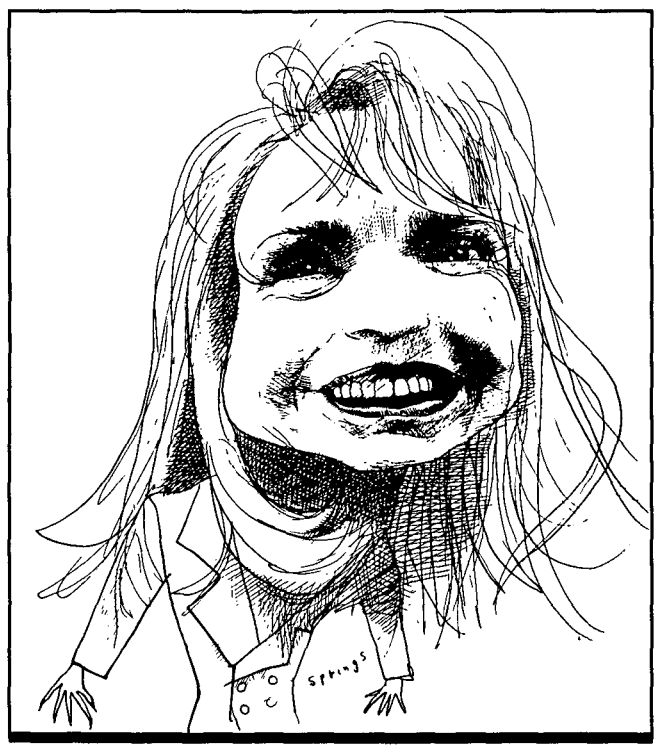
high levels by the nutty left? "We didn't know Hillary at all," confesses a Clinton adviser.

When the spunky, young Hillary Rodham left Park Ridge, Illinois, for college in 1965, she was by all accounts a Goldwater conservative. Four years later, as Wellesley's first-ever student commencement speaker, she took her leave of the school in a valedictory cloud of disjointed sixties rhetoric. What happened to Hillary at Wellesley? "What happens to everybody at Wellesley," says her close college friend, Eleanor "Eldie" Acheson (granddaughter of Truman Secretary of State Dean Acheson). "They become right-thinking."

The times they were a-changin', and a naturally ambitious but intellectually impressionable college girl like Hillary was made to order for a faculty mind-sweep. Hillary was a political science major at a time when virtually all departments at Wellesley, according to Acheson, were being swamped by "a ton of younger assistant professors and lecturers and instructors who came to that college with a lot of new ideas and some very aggressive, advocacy-oriented ways of teaching." Pursuit of knowledge for its own sake was giving way to the pursuit of Relevance. "Whatever the course, one needed to draw a current application from it. How did it relate to where we are today in the United States of America and the world at large?"



Hillary's 1969 commencement speech offers a glimpse of the results of her undergraduate education. After initial resistance and much negotiation, the Wellesley administration finally agreed to a student commencement speaker, on two conditions: the speaker and her remarks were to reflect a consensus of the graduating class and the remarks were to be "appropriate" and not embarrass the college. The students selected Hillary, the president of College Government, to speak. But the main commencement speech, delivered by the late Senator Edward Brooke of Massachusetts, a liberal Republican, flunked the "relevance" test. "Senator Brooke gave an address that was pretty close to being just absolutely disconnected with the four years of our experience at Wellesley," says Acheson. "Hillary decided it could not go unremarked upon, and before her speech, gave an extemporaneous critique of Brooke's remarks."

Although Acheson defends her friend, Hillary's speech, read today, appears barely intelligible, even by sixties standards:

> Every protest, every dissent . . . is unabashedly an attempt to forge an identity in this particular age. That attempt at forging for many of us over the past four years has meant coming to terms with our humanness. Within the context of a society that we perceive—now we can talk about reality, and I would like to talk about reality sometime, authentic reality, inauthentic reality, and what we have to accept of what we see—but our perception of it is that it hovers between the possibility of disaster and the potentiality for imaginatively responding to men's needs.

This part isn't much better:

> Words have a funny way of trapping our minds on the way to our tongues, but there are necessary means even in this multi-media age for attempting to come to grasps [sic] with some of the inarticulate maybe even inarticulable things that we're feeling.

But she springs free from the mind-word-tongue trap to express her impatience with empirical analysis as a basis for radical change:

> What does it mean to hear that 13.3 percent of the people in this country are below the poverty line? That's a percentage. We're not interested in social reconstruction; it's human reconstruction. How can we talk about percentages and trends?

It gets even more interesting:

> There are some things we feel, feelings that our prevailing, acquisitive and competitive corporate life, including tragically the universities, is not the way of life for us. We're searching for more immediate, ecstatic, and penetrating modes of living.

(Hillary must look back now with some amusement on the anti-corporate, anti-acquisitive rhetoric of her youth. Until a few months ago, she served on three corporate boards—French chemical giant, La Farge; Little Rock-based yogurt kings, TCBY; and the Wal-Mart Corporation, source of the recently deceased Sam Walton's fortune, perennially the largest personal fortune in the United States. Between 1986 and 1991, Hillary collected more than $129,000 in director's fees. "Hillary has always made out like a bandit," says a tax expert familiar with the Clintons' returns. "Director's fees have been a really big source of income to them over the years, particularly since the mid-eighties.")

In quest of more immediate, ecstatic, and penetrating modes of living, Hillary went from Wellesley to, of all places, Yale Law School. Here she met her future husband, and the story of their first meeting—she made the first

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move—is well known. Law school professor Burke Marshall took her under her wing, and she flourished academically. Marshall, a Kennedy family confidante, is the first person Ted Kennedy called after driving Mary Jo Kopechne off Chappaquiddick Bridge.

At Yale, Hillary slipped into an intellectual milieu marked by way-out and sometimes vicious left-wing polemics and activism. While leading campus protests against everything from the Vietnam war to the absence of a Tampax dispenser in the women's law school john, she found time to serve on the board of editors of a law school quarterly called the *Yale Review of Law and Social Action.*

The Spring 1970 issue featured articles by Duncan Kennedy (now a leading figure in Harvard Law's Marxist critical legal studies circle) and Robert Borosage (a radical left Jesse Jackson adviser based at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington). Another article, "Jamestown Seventy," proposed "political migration to a single state for the purpose of gaining political control and establishing a living laboratory for experiment." Impatient with the counterculture, the authors hungered for an American-style Kampuchea:

> Now a new frontier must be found to foster further experimentation, an environment relatively unpolluted by conventional patterns of social and political organization. Experimentation with drugs, sex, individual lifestyles or radical rhetoric and action within the larger society is an insufficient alternative. Total experimentation is necessary. New ideas and values must be taken out of heads and transformed into reality.

As a member of the editorial board, Hillary provided a "detailed sympathetic critique" of the article, according to a source at the journal. Her main problem with the piece was that it was "long on rhetoric, short on action," according to the source. Hillary, it seems, had found an appropriate laboratory for the "human reconstruction" she championed at Wellesley.

Hillary Rodham is listed as an associate editor in a special double issue of the journal, much of it devoted to the Black Panther murder trials then taking place in New Haven. Several drawings depict policemen as pigs. In one, rifle-toting, hairy-snouted pigs with nasal drip march in formation emitting "oinks" and thinking to themselves, "niggers, niggers, niggers, niggers . . ." Another shows a decapitated and dismembered pig squealing in agony. It is captioned, "Seize the Time!" If Hillary approved of her colleagues' artwork, then she appears to have foreshadowed by about twenty years such contemporary traffickers in cop-killing imagery as rappers NWA and Ice-T.

In the *New York Review of Books*, Garry Wills touted Hillary as "one of the more important scholar-activists of the last two decades" for her work in the field of children's rights and family policy. On federal children's policy, she repeatedly expressed the radical's contempt for fainthearted liberal approaches to federal programs for children. She rejected piecemeal testing and evaluation of programs targeted on needy children in favor of "comprehensive programs—those that provide services for the entire child population."

In "Children's Policies: Abandonment and Neglect" (*Yale Law Journal*, 1977), she chastises the Brookings Institution's Gilbert Steiner for his look-before-you-leap attitude toward federal intervention in the family: "Steiner posits that 'non-intervention serves as a basic guiding principle rather than an absolute.' Steiner's rejection of absolutism is welcome, but it is his cautious attitude toward governmental involvement in child-rearing that implicitly molds his analysis." And later: "There is nothing wrong with pressing for better programs for the needy, but Steiner sets his sights too low."

Underlying Hillary's demands for a sweeping range of federal children's programs *now* is the same impatience with empiricism she exhibited in her adieu to Wellesley ("What does it mean . . . 13.3 percent . . . are below the poverty line? That's a percentage . . ."). The flaws in Steiner's analysis, she writes, can be pinpointed by

> examining two familiar corollaries of the non-interventionist principle, both of which help shape Steiner's evaluation of federal policy toward children. . . . The first corollary is that in order to overcome the non-interventionist impulse the evidence supporting proposed or ongoing children's programs must be greater than that necessary to overcome resistance to change in other areas of public policy. . . . The second corollary . . . is that children's programs, once underway, should be judged more quickly and harshly than other programs.

It's worth noting in passing that her second corollary merely restates part of her first, an embarrassing logical lapse in a finely tuned legal mind.

In any case, the empirical threshold is just a blind for sentimentalists: "Apparently we share so much apprehension about potential harm to cherished, albeit fantasized, family values that programs for children must demonstrate immediate success or risk extinction."

But Hillary's advocacy of massive and immediate expansion of federal child-care programs was relative tinkering compared to the radical redefinition of the relationship between state and family that she called for as a champion of the "children's rights" movement. In "Children Under the Law" (a 1974 essay reprinted by the *Harvard Educational Review* in 1982) she proposed three measures for obtaining "children's rights": (1) the immediate abolition of the legal status of minority and the reversal of the legal presumption of the incompetence of minors in favor of a presumption of competence; (2) the extension to children of all procedural rights guaranteed to adults; (3) the rejection of the legal presumption of the identity of interests between parents and their children, and permission for competent children to assert those independent interests in the courts. (In effect, when parents and their teenage kids don't agree on who's the boss, a judge steps in.)

The relationship between her first and third proposals

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forms a powerful wedge for the courts to intercede between parents and children to resolve intra-family disputes. It works like this: Under proposal No. 1 (the reversal of the presumption of incompetence), competence would be decided case by case by the courts. Hillary accepts that infants will in most cases be deemed incompetent, but when it comes to kids 12 and over, she leans to the view that they are more like adults than kids and that their presumed competence ought to withstand challenge in most cases. Under proposal No. 3 (the rejection of the presumption of the identity of interests between parents and their children), when the interests of parents and children diverge, competent children—that's most teenagers, remember—are free to testify against Mom and Dad and the courts will decide between them.

In a 1979 article, "Children's Rights: A Legal Perspective," Hillary—by this time over 30 and wife of the governor of Arkansas—answered critics who feared her brand of children's rights would elevate family squabbles into legal battles:

> The fears that many people have about . . . a law of children's rights arise from their concern about increasing government control over such intra-family disputes. A letter sent out several years ago about the Child and Family Development Act urged persons to oppose the proposed bill because it would, according to the writers, allow children to take parents to court if they were ordered to take out the garbage. Family disagreements that result in legal battles are, of course, of a more serious nature. . . . The most recent example of disagreement between parent and child is found in the abortion cases recently decided by the United States Supreme Court. The Court held that a minor child might seek an abortion without her parents consent and over her parents' objections if a court believed it to be in the child's best interests.

In other words: "Don't worry, we'll still leave mundane decisions to the discretion of parents, it's just the important ones they can't be trusted with." Did she think her critics would be reassured?

How far into the home would Hillary invite the courts?

> I prefer that intervention into an ongoing family be limited to decisions that could have long-term and possible irreparable effects if they were not resolved. Decisions about motherhood and abortion, schooling, cosmetic surgery, treatment of venereal disease, or employment, and others where the decision or lack of one will significantly affect the child's future should not be made unilaterally by parents. Children should have a right to be permitted to decide their own future if they are competent.

Incidentally, it is by no means clear in these litigation-happy times that a "long-term and possible irreparable effects" criterion would exclude take-out-the-garbage cases.

Maybe the most irresponsible thing about Hillary's writing in this field is that she never attempts to calculate the "chilling effect" of what she proposes. In a world where parent-child tiffs are actionable by legally competent children, will parents have the nerve to oppose their children's wishes on matters of importance? Or even insignificant matters? How will they know where the line is between the important and the trivial?

I have read all she has written on children's rights and can only conclude that Hillary suffers from a massive misunderstanding of the function of parents. "The presumption of incompetency has profound significance not just because children are reliant on adults to exercise their right for them, but because a child denied the opportunity to exercise responsibilities is effectively denied the opportunity to mature into a responsible adult," she writes. She seems to miss the obvious: as children mature, sensitive parents gradually relax the reins and give their children greater freedom and greater responsibility. Hillary Clinton doesn't appear to grasp how spontaneously evolved social institutions like the family absorb and retain knowledge and wisdom through the ages, an ignorance typical of the left to which she belongs. Garry Wills laments with Hillary that we don't have a "calibrated scale of increasing competence applicable to all children." Of course we don't. We don't need one. Because we have something far better, families: millions of calibrated scales of increasing competence tailored individually to millions of individual children by millions of parents.

"Hillary's probably the only person in this campaign who wanted it to be in Little Rock. The DLC crowd and the centrists—all of Washington—have basically been left high and dry," says an insider.

Truth be told, Hillary Clinton harbors a deeply cynical view of the traditional family, its origins, and its defenders. In "Children Under the Law" she likens arguments against her plan to eliminate the legal minority status of children to arguments in favor of black slavery and against the emancipation of married women. In the same article, she goes even further, equating the family itself with slavery:

> The basic rationale for depriving people of rights in a dependency relationship is that certain individuals are incapable or undeserving of the right to take care of themselves and consequently need social institutions specifically designed to safeguard their position. Along with the family, past and present examples of such arrangements include marriage, slavery and the Indian reservation system.

In her view, the family as we know it, in which children are legally dependent on their mother and father until achieving majority at 18 or 21, is not a social institution adapted over time to meet children's needs of protection,

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sustenance, and love. It is instead a breeding ground of perpetual conflict that was "invented" in the nineteenth century in response to organized labor demands aimed at protecting adult workers against competition from children:

> Many of the modern conflicts between parents and children arise because of the 'invention' of adolescence. Children in the Middle Ages became adults at the age of seven. . . . The concept of childhood gradually was expanded until children became more and more dependent on their parents and parents became less and less dependent on their children for economic support and sustenance. During the nineteenth century in this country, the idea of compulsory education provided an opportunity for children to be trained, and took them out of an increasingly smaller work force, so that they would not compete with adults. Child labor laws continued this trend and so did the imposition of age requirements for school attendance. . . . Because children now remain in the family for longer periods, during which they are still dependent but becoming more and more adult, the opportunities for intrafamily disputes have increased dramatically.

As Hillary would reverse the presumption of the identity of interests between parents and their children, so I would like to reverse the presumption of the identity of interests between Hillary and America's children. I suspect that Hillary's years of activism on behalf of children's rights and comprehensive federal child care have less to do with the interests of children than with the interests of the feminist elite of working mothers that Hillary has come to exemplify. If children mature much earlier than is conventionally believed, and if such needs as they still have for adult supervision can be met by federal day-care centers, then career-first moms (and dads, for that matter) need not have their busy days bustling from law offices to corporate board rooms to television studios troubled by occasional pangs of conscience for their neglected children. It lets all of America's Hillarys right off the hook, once and for all.

"There are some things we feel, feelings that our prevailing acquisitive and competitive corporate life . . . is not the way of life for us. We're searching for more immediate, ecstatic, and penetrating modes of living."

The children's rights movement fizzled out in the late seventies, far too wacky to get very far even in the pre-Reagan courts. About the only chance it has to make a resurgence, and it's a slender one, is if Bill Clinton is elected President and his wife assumes responsibility for screening his judicial appointees, as she did in Arkansas, according to a story in the *New York Times*.

If one is to believe street talk in Arkansas, Hillary's rejection of traditional family life is not confined to her scholarly scribblings. The status of the Clintons' marriage, including the possibility that Bill's extramarital wanderings reflect an "open marriage," is the subject of wide speculation and gossip in Arkansas political circles. Those close to the Clintons hotly deny any such allegations.

Friends of the Clintons say that there is a very powerful bond between them, a bond immediately apparent to anyone who sees them together. "What I get a sense of when I'm around them is a really powerful relationship, of two people who really take a lot of delight in each other," says Hillary's close friend, film actress Mary Steenburgen.

Powerful though it may be, there is a pattern of details about their relationship that suggests it is not as fully fused as an old-fashioned marriage. The Clinton's financial assets are separately held; Bill draws a modest salary as governor, and basically the rest of their assets are under Hillary's name. (Despite her husband's frequent public complaints about the investment in non-productive assets and "paper profits" of the eighties, Hillary appears to have done well by such an aggressive strategy in the decade of greed. "At Wharton business school this spring, [Clinton] was yelling at them about how many of them went off to be investment bankers and did this sophisticated financial stuff instead of doing something that was actually productive," says a source familiar with the couple's tax returns. "Hillary herself in 1987 bought these straddles, Standard and Poors. She's done the kind of stuff that he thinks is bad. The way they've actually gotten the richest is that in 1986 Hillary sunk a lot of her money into this thing called the Value Partnership. It's very aggressively managed: they short all of these stocks, there are all these puts and calls, and it did very well for them." But Hillary has never been one to let principle stand in the way of pecuniary gain: in 1981 she reported a tidy, if politically incorrect, capital gain from the sale of stock in De Beers, the South African diamond barons.)

The Clintons give to separate charities. And attend separate churches; he's a Baptist and she's a Methodist. But if one is to believe wicked gossips in Little Rock, they do attend church at the same *time*: election time. The two also take separate vacations. Hillary vacations annually with the Arkansas native Steenburgen, daughter Chelsea (named after sixties folkie Judy Collins' hit "Chelsea Morning") in tow. San Francisco is a favorite destination. (Steenburgen explains that they are mother-daughter deals, to which even her son is not invited.) As should be clear by now, the Clintons have separate ideological agendas, and Hillary is indeed a faction leader within the Clinton campaign. And finally, press reports notwithstanding, Hillary appears to have retained her maiden name. Legend has it that after many blamed her retention of her maiden name, Rodham, for her husband's failed re-election bid in 1980, Hillary took his last name. Strangely, though, the name she gives on page one of her 1991 tax return is Hillary Rodham.

None of these details in and of itself rebuts the Clinton

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loyalists' avowals of a "powerful relationship" or a "strong bond." Indeed, many of these arrangements are typical of modern marriages among elite segments of society. But that's just the point. They are typical of modern, post-sixties counterculture designer marriages, not of traditional, pre-counterculture marriages. Steenburgen puts it this way: "They're two whole people. One hasn't given away huge parts of themselves to the other."

In 1978, Hillary Rodham was appointed Chairman of the Board of the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) by Jimmy Carter. Established by Congress as a federally funded, independent, private, non-profit, and *non-political* corporation to provide legal assistance to the poor in non-criminal cases, the LSC degenerated under Rodham into what the late Warren Brookes called "a $300 million liberal political action committee," rife with illegality. During her chairmanship and later tenure on the board, the LSC published a political training manual showing "how community organizations and public interest groups can win political power and resources," a sequel to the earlier "Tactical Investigations of People's Struggles." They even made a contribution to a mayoral campaign in Georgia, rationalizing it as "a project to educate clients about their rights in the legislative process."

In January 1980, the LSC funneled taxpayer money into something called the Proposition 9 Task Force, a campaign to coordinate the efforts of thirty LSC grant recipient groups and 500 attorneys in California to defeat Proposition 9, a ballot initiative to cut state income taxes in half. The LSC is explicitly barred by its charter from providing this type of assistance to defeat a state ballot initiative, and in a September 19, 1983 report, the Comptroller General of the United States (GAO) nailed the Rodham LSC to the wall.

According to the report, the LSC, the Western Center on Law and Poverty (the California legal services grantee that requested and received a $61,655 LSC "Special Needs" grant to hire four "coordinators" to direct the campaign), "and certain other unidentified California Legal Services grantees violated the provision of 42 U.S.C. §2996e(d)(4) in providing funds and personnel support for the Proposition 9 Task Force that operated a large-scale opposition campaign to the Proposition 9 ballot measure."

Because the Task Force "had obtained staff commitments from approximately 30 California Legal Services Programs funded by the Corporation," the GAO concluded that LSC resources dedicated to the campaign went far beyond those accounted for in the "special needs" grant. According to the report: "The cost of these staff commitments is unknown and difficult to compute, considering the lapsed time. However, we know that the campaign lasted approximately 3 months and that many staff persons at field offices throughout California devoted at least half their time to the campaign. With the grant . . . the Task Force hired four coordinators who had experience working with poor people and in political campaigns. Funds were also expended on clerical staff, travel, printing and postage associated with campaign activities." These activities, the Comptroller concluded, "were the precise sort . . . prohibited by the statute's injunction against using corporate funds to oppose a ballot measure that is already on the ballot and where client's legal rights are not at issue."

But Task Force 9 was a mere pilot project in politicization and illegality, compared to the corporation's 1981 effort to mobilize Legal Services lawyers into a nationwide network of resistance to Reagan Administration plans to restrain the growth of entitlements and social programs and rein in the rogue LSC. In January 1981, the LSC held a Regional Project Directors meeting in Boulder, Colorado, attended by a host of officials from grantee organizations in nearby states and Corporation officials from Washington. In a training session captured on videotape, a parade of speakers took the floor to denounce Reagan fiscal policy in startlingly frank terms and outline their plans for organizing an LSC network to combat it.

The GAO concluded from the remarks that LSC grantee officials had violated statutory bars against using LSC money to hold training programs to advocate public policies, encourage political activities, or create associations, federations, or networks. They faulted the Corporation itself for failing to insure the compliance of its grantees with the provisions of the Legal Services Corporation Act.

In 1982, Hillary and other holdovers from the Carter LSC board made one more attempt to nullify Reagan's mandate by seeking an injunction in the U.S. District Court to prevent the newly appointed Reagan board from assuming

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control of the board or even holding a meeting of the board. They moved on the grounds that the Reagan board members, as recess appointments, had not been confirmed by the Senate, as required by the LSC act. In denying the motion, the judge observed that four members of the Carter board had themselves been recess appointments. One of the four was Hillary Rodham.

Because of the way the Legal Services Corporation Act is written, only the corporation itself has the power to enforce compliance with the Act by grantees. No third party has standing to sue to compel compliance. Given this virtual immunity to external authority, Hillary's lax supervision of the Corporation, while its staff not only tolerated but actively encouraged prohibited political action by grantees, was an especially egregious betrayal of the public trust.

Hillary served in 1987-88 as director and chair of the board of directors of the New World Foundation, a philanthropy dedicated to the support of "progressive activist organizations," as she puts it in her foreword to the group's annual report for 1987-88. While the foundation (ranked as one of the country's ten most liberal in a recent Capital Research Center monograph) does back some fairly well-known liberal groups (Norman Lear's People for the American Way, Randall Robinson's Trans-Africa Forum, and the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund), under Hillary it also financed a number of groups associated with the hard left.

In 1988, New World gave $5,000 to the Committee in Support of the People of El Salvador (CISPES) education fund. CISPES was founded at meetings in New York City in 1980 by Farid Handal (brother of El Salvador's Communist party chief Shafik Handal), who had come to the United States to mobilize American support for the FMLN, the major Communist guerrilla organization in El Salvador. Also in 1988, New World gave $2,500 to Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, a group dedicated to exposing conservative bias in the media, especially the television networks. That's right, conservative bias. In *Extra!*, its newsletter, FAIR chastised such liberal standard-bearers as Michael Kinsley and National Public Radio for being too tough on Jesse Jackson. Last year, in a special issue of the newsletter devoted to media coverage of the Persian Gulf War, editor Jim Naurekas lashed out: "The euphoria at the beginning and the end of the Persian Gulf War brackets one of the most disturbing episodes in U.S. journalistic history—a period when many reporters for the national media abandoned any pretense of neutrality or reportorial distance in favor of boosterism for the war effort." (While Bill Clinton maintains he supported the decision to move militarily in the Gulf, I'm not so sure about Hillary. Mary Steenburgen recalls a conversation in which she along with Hillary and another friend discussed their "feelings" about the prospect of U.S. involvement in the war. "Both of them had felt like [Saddam] was a really frightening person that was potentially very dangerous to people, yet we all talked about our feelings that war was not the way to solve everything," she says. *Potentially* very dangerous? The guy had gassed Kurdish villages and conquered a neighbor by this time.)

In 1988, Hillary lavished $20,000 on the Christic Institute, the far left crackpots who flacked the "secret team" theory, alleging a massive, 20-year conspiracy by CIA and Special Forces operatives to do everything from run a heroin ring out of Indochina in the sixties to topple the Sandinistas in the eighties. In June 1991, they were assessed $1.1 million in court-ordered sanctions for filing a frivolous lawsuit against General John Singlaub and other supposed secret teamsters. Hillary doled out $15,000 in 1987 to the National Lawyers Guild, founded in the 1930s as an adjunct to the American Communist party and retaining party ties to this day. Support also went to the Center for Constitutional Studies (co-founded by Chicago 7 lawyer William Kunstler) and the Institute for Policy Studies (self-styled "center for radical scholarship")—the list goes on and on to include scores of other more obscure but equally fishy-sounding grantees.

While these grants may have gone to projects that sound innocuous enough, if you give twenty thousand bucks to bad folks for a merely objectionable project, then that's twenty thousand they don't have to raise for a truly hideous one. Moreover, in her foreword to the annual report, Hillary makes a special point of New World's predilection for giving money away to the left with no strings attached:

> The foundation has recognized the dilemma presented to public policy as federal support is withdrawn from social programs and social advocacy at the same time as the need for such programs grows more acute. As a result philanthropy has had to serve as a bridge from the "system" to the neediest and least represented. The New World Foundation has sought to use its resources to strengthen that bridge and to encourage other foundations to focus on the fragility of activist and advocacy efforts on behalf of the poor in general and people of color in particular. In this effort we have made *mostly general support grants, rather than special project grants, so as to provide core support to organizers and advocates.* [Emphasis added.]

Guess you can't be too choosy with Ronald Reagan on the loose.

There are those who would say of Hillary's involvement in radical politics, "Aw, she was just a kid." But she wasn't just a kid. She was a middle-aged woman of 40 when sponsoring the hard left from her perch at the New World Foundation. Moreover, she has not, as far as I know, publicly repudiated or even distanced herself from the views or activism described in this article, and her husband's presidential campaign was the perfect occasion to do so. There is no reason she ought to be forgiven, when she hasn't repented. Especially since she is right now doing her utmost to drive her husband's campaign into her own corner of the Democratic party, where the liberal left and the radical left meet. ❐

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Have We Seen the End of Banks?

by Warren T. Brookes

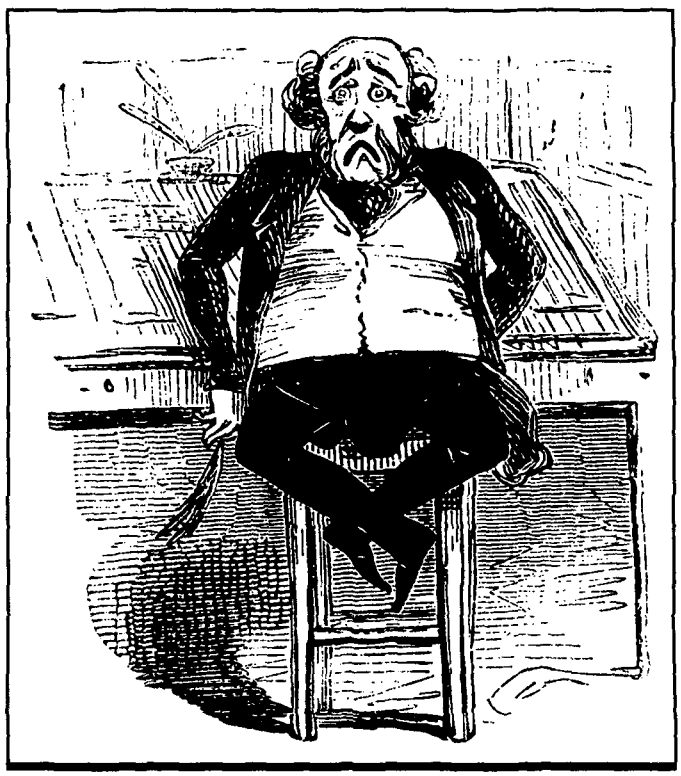
A couple of years ago, the Cato Institute's Catherine England, who has written brilliantly on banking reform, was asked: "What would happen to the U.S. economy if our banking system were to collapse?" Her answer: "Not all that much."

Mrs. England was right. Consider the automobile industry. Not only are GM and Ford already the second- and third-largest financial institutions in the U.S., writing most of their own car loans and leases and supplying lines of credit to dealers and suppliers. They also have virtually unlimited access to the world's financial and credit markets. And they have become major providers of the short-term commercial paper that is rapidly replacing the traditional commercial bank loan. Their capital backing dwarfs that of most banks. With only modest changes in the law, both companies could provide a full line of banking services nationwide, and it probably wouldn't take them that long to get up to speed.

What about housing? Of the $3.7 trillion in home mortgages, nearly $2 trillion, or 53 percent, are now held outside the banking system. Many large real estate agencies now finance deals wholly outside of the banking sector. GM and Ford, not to mention GE and Sears, are major players in the mortgage-backed securities industry, and thirsting for more of that kind of credit gold.

Checking accounts and other depository services can now be handled through money market funds, cash management accounts, or plain old credit cards. Commercial and industrial borrowing and lending can be done by companies themselves. In 1960 the ratio of bank loans to commercial paper floated by companies and their investment bankers was 10:1. Today it's 1.5:1, and falling. Outstanding non-financial commercial paper rose from $13 billion to $129 billion between 1976 and 1989.

Commercial and industrial loans fell from 31 percent of all bank assets to 19 percent between 1980 and 1988. In 1991 they fell to less than 16 percent. Between 1981 and 1988, the banks' share of private credit supplied to domestic non-financial business fell from two-thirds to less than half. The share of domestic private non-financial credit provided by credit market "instruments"—from junk bonds to commercial paper—rose from 25 percent to 51 percent. By 1990, with junk bonds reviving and the banks in a regulatory crunch, well over 70 percent of all private credit supplied to the U.S. non-financial market came from credit market instruments.



To put it bluntly: In the last two decades banks have faded from preeminence to a secondary role in the credit life of our economy, and that trend is accelerating. As Mrs. England has written, "Bankers' inability to adapt and innovate . . . has left them with a shrinking pool of customers and thereby has reduced their importance in the evolving financial services industry."

Although some of the shift can be attributed to the obsolescence of the banking rules laid down by Congress in Glass-Steagall and McFadden-Douglas, it is the telecommunications revolution that has made the traditional bank a dinosaur. The information revolution has altered our naive ideas about money, and is now moving world financial markets toward the kind of market-

Warren T. Brookes, who died last December, was a nationally syndicated columnist for the Detroit News. *This essay is adapted, with permission, from the May 1991 issue of the* Durrell Journal of Money and Banking *(P.O. Box 847, Berryville, Virginia 22611).*

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based monetary rules that conservatives (especially gold-standard conservatives) have long cherished.

Faxing a Bank?

Illustrative of the role of telecommunications in the obsolescence of traditional banks was the way a Kuwaiti bank used the fax machine to move itself overnight to Bahrain. During the Iraqi invasion, Hissham Razzuqi, vice president and manager of the $10 billion Gulf Investment Corporation in Kuwait City, realized he had to act to protect his holdings from being seized. As Iraqi gunships began bombing the nearby palace, Razzuqi holed up in his skyscraper, called Gulf International Bank, GIC's sister organization in Bahrain, and asked them to set up a temporary headquarters for his bank. Then he calmly rescued his bank one page at a time.

As assistants ran computer printouts of all of GIC's books, Razzuqi opened up three phone lines to GIB. On two of them he faxed the bank's key documents—account statements, its primary letters and lines of credit, and its capital paper—transferring the possession of these documents in effect to another bank, nearly 280 miles away. On the third line he checked to make sure that the documents were being received.

From time to time nearby gunfire forced him to take cover and stop sending, but by the end of the morning all of the essential transmissions had been completed. As Razzuqi told *Institutional Investor,* "It was really difficult because we kept having to repeat pages. When we looked out of the windows we could see Iraqi helicopters flying by." Nevertheless, by early afternoon the bank had been moved to Bahrain, where it was reestablished.

Hundreds of billions of dollars of financial transactions rocket around this planet of ours every day electronically, and almost entirely in the form of information transfers. That one can move a whole bank by telecommunications should be no surprise. The episode vindicates economist Dave Hale's recent jest that, while Kuwait was a very large banking system without a country, the U.S. had become a very large country without a banking system.

Money as Information

Money itself has never been anything but a medium of exchange, and thus—in its most elemental sense—an information system that equilibrates the values of goods and services. We should not be surprised that as we have moved into the telecommunications age, banks whose only function is to trade in money (information) should have become the most endangered of the traditional institutions.

Banks, after all, have always been primarily in the information business. Actual physical money in circulation, including gold and silver, never has been more than a small fraction—six or seven percent—of the total $3.4 trillion in total bank liabilities, or of the $3.3 trillion that makes up the broad M-2 monetary aggregate. Most of that aggregate is pure information, infinitely mobile, and definitely faxable. Now if a bank is nothing more than an information system, then by definition every information system can be a bank, and every owner of an information station—from a desktop computer to a mainframe terminal—can be a banker. He can access any financial market, move investments into any instrument, and exchange dollars for marks and paper for gold at will.

Information Standard?

Bankers no longer run the world, the world runs the bankers—sets their interest rates, raises or lowers the value of their paper currencies, raises or lowers their level of capital equity and determines their solvency. Even when the Fed tries to raise or lower interest rates it can do really only what the financial (information) market will let it do. If the market thinks the Fed's policies are too loose, and thus potentially inflationary, it will drive up long rates even as the Fed lowers its short rates. The rising yield curve spread that results will, in turn, instantly expand banks' incentives to create credit, further reinforcing an inflationary effect and taking some of the power of money creation away from the Fed. That lowers the value of the currency, and forces the Fed to bring short rates back up into line.

As an illustration, on March 8, 1991, the U.S. unemployment rate jumped an alarming .3 percent. The Fed hit the panic button and lowered the Fed Funds rate 25 basis points. But the bond market immediately sold off, driving long rates up by nearly 15 basis points, defeating the Fed's policy action and raising the yield spread to 230 basis points, the largest since 1988, when the last inflationary outbreak took place. The Fed had to allow the Fed Funds rate to ease back up to 6.25, where it stayed for the next two weeks or so. While this action failed to bring long rates back down, it did arrest their rise, and halted the surge in commodity futures prices, which had jumped from a CRB index of 211 to 221, before falling back to 217 after Fed firming. It doesn't always work quite as instantly as this, but the lags between policy mistakes and market retribution grow shorter with each new microchip and each new futures instrument, destroying the notion of the independence of central banks from the market place.

And what does this augur for ordinary banks? A few years back, Walter Wriston observed that those who worried about the loss of the gold standard had failed to see that we were now on a new international "information standard" in which the ability of the world's depositors and investors to control the actions of banks and governments was rising steadily, while the power of governments and their central bankers to spring monetary surprises—inflations or devaluations—was diminishing.

For thirty-five years following World War II, no one cared about the price of gold. Today it is on nearly every TV news broadcast. Often as not, right beside it is the trend of the dollar against the yen, the deutsche mark, and sterling. This means a growing number of individual investors now have as much or more information on money, credit, and the financial markets as all but the most sophisticated bankers, and certainly as much as any of the 12,500 local bankers around the U.S. For the top 5-10 percent of the public—who control at least 85 percent of the total financial assets—banks have become nothing more than convenient processors of information.

The traditional notion of banks as the center of economic activity for their communities is now simply absurd, but this devolution of power is not just a phenomenon of banking. Central governments are less and less able to control the behavior of their citizens, let alone whether they spend, save, or invest. That means they are less and less able to prevent markets from asserting their power over domestic economies.

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The microchip is increasingly putting the global marketplace within reach of every individual with the skills to understand it.

Banks Obsolete?

In this picture, nothing is more obsolete than the red-brick bank with the Ionic columns, which takes our money and lends it out, issues and processes checks, and moves money around the nation in batches of paper. It is now a charming anachronism. The only thing sustaining it is government franchise, regulation, and deposit insurance. If it were not for $100,000 deposit insurance, how long could banks compete with uninsured money market mutual funds? The system is as obsolete as socialism in Eastern Europe, and for the same reason.

For all intents and purposes, banks are wards of the state, quasi-governmental entities wholly dependent on the bureaucratic process, and thus the inevitable victims of its breakdown. The process started when we decided we could not afford to have any banks fail their customers and created the deposit insurance system. With that stroke we began consciously to replace the private risk capital of bank equity with the public capital of insurance. When deposit insurance was created in 1935, U.S. bank capital averaged well over 13.5 percent, even in the depth of the Great Depression. Today it averages less than 6 percent.

The only "deposit insurance" bank depositors used to have was the level of capital at risk in the institution; well-capitalized banks could attract lots of depositors. But deposit insurance made capital irrelevant to the depositor and—since it socialized risk—unattractive to the investor. Why put your money in a system where your capital has to subsidize less solvent competition? We socialized ownership, too, because the only way that taxpayers can assume this new risk is for the government to regulate it intensively. And just as socialism—which depended on the power, credibility, and solvency of the central government—was rendered obsolete by an information marketplace that made capital more fungible, so a socialized banking system will fail as well.

When the thrift industry became essentially insolvent in 1979, some $400 billion began to move out of insured thrift accounts into uninsured money

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market accounts. Today, the banking system is suffering from one of the longest silent runs in its history, losing 14 percent of its demand and other checkable deposit accounts (after inflation) since 1986, as people and businesses continue to move their money out of traditional bank accounts into non-traditional locations.

This trend will worsen unless banks adapt to the information revolution and unless the non-bank banks are allowed to show them the way. That is the central issue of what passes for the bank reform recently debated in Congress. Predictably, the bankers themselves—the apparatchiks and nomenklatura in this socialist system—are resisting real reform. While most of them applaud the idea of offering a broader range of financial services, as the Treasury reform proposes, they are absolutely unwilling to give up even a strand of their elaborate deposit insurance safety net. And they are drumming up support. They have so roused their party bosses in Congress that even the timid deposit-insurance reforms called for by Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady are in trouble. Anyone who dares to suggest that maybe we ought to limit total insurance to $100,000 per individual, that it might be worthwhile to establish "haircuts" on uninsured accounts, that we should tamper with the concept of "too big to fail," is accused of trying to "undermine the confidence" in the whole system.

This is dangerous, for the freedom to succeed requires the freedom to fail. Take away the latter and you have destroyed the former. When we made it impossible for banks to fail, we made it impossible for them to succeed, especially when the information systems of the world were liberated by technology. For new technology, as George Gilder has pointed out, not only makes untold successes possible, it also rapidly exposes failure. Furthermore, it can circumvent or destroy almost anything governments devise to thwart it. Unless politicians and bankers are prepared to give up at least a significant portion of their safety net and accept the freedom to fail as the price of success, the bank industry is doomed.

Let's briefly recapitulate why this is so: By raising deposit insurance back in 1980 to 100 percent of S&L deposits and more than 80 percent of bank deposits, we effectively underwrote the entire financial system with taxpayer guarantees, notwithstanding bankers' fatuous contention that it is their fees that prop up the FDIC. By definition, we are not insuring deposits, we are insuring loans (because that is where most, if not all, deposits eventually go). Every loan made by a bank is guaranteed by you and me.

Since no one has invented the perfectly omniscient banker, you and I are exposed to intolerable losses and further invasions of the treasury. The only way that we can protect ourselves is through heavy-handed regulation and tight limits over what banks can lend for or invest in. And under present accounting rules, there is no way to know the precise market value of all loan assets—even the tightest regulation will be too late to catch some insolvencies.

If we don't turn banks and S&Ls loose, the banking system will disappear, but without a serious reform of deposit insurance, and the end of "too big to fail," this kind of further deregulation cannot, should not, and will not happen, and the U.S. will continue to be a large country without a banking system. It is inconceivable that we should let banks sell stocks and bonds, market real estate and insurance, and perform the other services we now get from investment houses and underwriters. It is equally inconceivable that we should invite into this fully insured enterprise commercial corporations like Sears and GM and Ford or GE to participate in our tax-supported guarantees. One Chrysler should have been enough, shouldn't it?

In 1979, faced with soaring interest rates and double-digit inflation, Americans began to take their money out of insured thrift accounts and put it in uninsured money market funds. Faced with this shift, Congress and an already insolvent thrift industry refused to recognize it for what it was—the beginning of the end of thrifts as a government-constructed financial entity, and the rise of a whole new form of financial institution. Instead of forcing these institutions to compete in the new marketplace, government propped them up, not only lifting the lid on passbook and certificate-of-deposit rates (which was necessary) but also more than doubling the insurance coverage to keep large accounts in thrifts and away from more attractive options in the financial markets.

The net result of that tragically failed policy is at least $150 billion in insolvent institutions. It is easy to blame the mess on lax regulators and greedy politicians. Instead, it was the open invitation of risk-free investment that created an avalanche of deposits, and a failure to understand the speed with which information technology was revolutionizing the financial systems of the world—a world in which traditional banking institutions, including the thrifts, have become anachronistic. ❐

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A White Lie

by Michael K. Flaherty

The estimated 500,000 men and women who marched for abortion rights in Washington last April were instructed by their leaders to dress in white, as a symbol of their purity. But even discounting their apparel, the crowd was, like the crowd at all abortion rallies, overwhelmingly white—or, as the *New York Times* put it, "a remarkable display of homogenous distress." Given that black women use abortion twice as much as white women, why do black faces continue to be conspicuously absent in these public displays of support? The question cannot honestly be answered without a look at the largest abortion provider in the world, Planned Parenthood, a multibillion-dollar conglomerate that conducts its activities in over a hundred countries.

Margaret Sanger, who founded Planned Parenthood in a two-room shack in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn in 1923, remains a hero to the abortion movement and a "liberator" to the prestige press. Sanger outlined her beliefs in several books, and in her monthly magazine entitled *Birth Control Review*. In *Pivot of Civilization*, first published in 1922, she described her objectives: "More children from the fit, less from the unfit—*that* is the chief aim of birth control." The people Sanger considered unfit were "all nonaryan people." She estimated that these people—the "dysgenic races"—comprised 70 percent of the American population. Sanger believed that this "great biological menace to the future of civilization . . . deserved to be treated like criminals." She proposed to "segregate morons who are increasing and multiplying." Successful implementation of her proposals, according to her, would result in "a race of thoroughbreds."

The similarity to Nazi ideas was not a coincidence. As George Grant points out in his history of Planned Parenthood, *Grand Illusions* (1988), Sanger devoted the entire April 1933 issue of *Birth Control Review* to eugenics. One of the articles, "Eugenic Sterilization: An Urgent Need," was written by Ernst Rudin, Hitler's director of genetic sterilization and a founder of the Nazi Society for Racial Hygiene.

While Sanger's early campaign was aimed primarily at east Europeans, in 1939 she began to target blacks by creating the "Negro Project," to promote birth control and sterilization specifically within the black community. To carry out her plan, she sought the support of prominent black ministers and political leaders. She wrote, "The most successful educational approach to the Negro is through a religious appeal. We do not want the word to get out that we want to exterminate the Negro population, and the minister is the man who can straighten out that idea if it occurs to any of their more rebellious members." The implications of the Negro Project are all but ignored in Ellen Chesler's adoring new biography *Woman of Valor: Margaret Sanger and the Birth Control Movement in America.*[1]

None of the Planned Parenthood presidents since Sanger admits to anything less than admiration for her. Dr. Alan Gutmacher, her immediate successor, said that Planned Parenthood is "merely walking down the path that Ms. Sanger carved out for us." Even Faye Wattleton, the black woman who was named *Ms.* magazine's 1989 "Woman of the Year" for her work as president, said that she was "proud" to be "walking in the footsteps of Margaret Sanger."

Wattleton stepped down in January after fourteen years as head of Planned Parenthood. Although a successor has yet to be named, one of the favorites is Alexander Sanger, Margaret's thoroughbred grandson and president and chief executive of Planned Parenthood of New York City, the largest of 170 affiliates nationwide. "With all her success, my grandmother left some unfinished business, and I intend to finish it," he told the *New York Times* last year.

He needn't be so modest. Today, 70 percent of the clinics operated by Planned Parenthood in the U.S. are in black and Hispanic neighborhoods. For every three black babies born, two are aborted. Forty-three percent of all abortions in the U.S. are performed on black women. This is hardly a matter of "choice." In a poll taken in 1988 by the National Opinion Research Center, 62 percent of blacks said that abortion should be illegal *in all circumstances*, a fact ignored by the patronizing whites who cite "poor blacks" as constituents for whose abortion rights they are fighting. One of the first to assess the threat that abortion poses to blacks was Jesse Jackson, who in 1977 referred to abortion as "genocide against the black race." On September 9, 1977, he sent this telegram to Congress: "AS A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE I MUST OPPOSE THE USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS FOR A POLICY OF KILLING INFANTS . . ." It was only when Jackson tried to enter the Democratic party mainstream that he abandoned this position for the pro-choice rhetoric of the party's white, upper-middle-class power brokers.

As the ranks of Margaret Sanger's critics dwindle, the list of her supporters lengthens. *Life* magazine in 1990 named her one of "the 100 most important Americans of the 20th Century." Last October 12, she was installed in Arizona's Hall of Fame. Vocal protests by a

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[1]Simon & Schuster, 639 pages, $27.50.

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dozen Republican legislators led Gloria Feldt, executive director of Planned Parenthood of Central and Northern Arizona, to make the Orwellian response, "I would say [those who object] are . . . flirting with racism."

How long can Sanger's supporters remain in denial? From time to time, all Americans are forced to address and reconcile some inescapable and painful truths about their intellectual forbears. As David Frum wrote in these pages last September, "Just as any left that wants to go anywhere in American politics is now obliged to prove its patriotism, the right needs to prove that it's not composed of haters." Marchers and organizers for women's rights, if they truly are concerned about the fate of black women, must be equally honest about the racial reality of abortion—and its eugenicist roots. Until they are, the white that they consider the symbolic color of their struggle will reflect a cruel irony. ❐

BEN STEIN'S DIARY

Guys and Dollars

by Benjamin J. Stein

Tuesday

Off to New York. To see a show. That's right. A trip across the country to see a musical comedy, the revival of *Guys and Dolls*, to be specific. My little family, Maw, Paw, big sister, and I, all went to see it when it first came out sometime long ago, like maybe forty years ago. That was at the National Theater in Washington. Broadway plays used to come to Washington, Boston, and New Haven before they came to Broadway. Try-outs. Getting the kinks out. We saw *South Pacific*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Call Me Madam*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and lots of others that way. From the second balcony at the National Theater. How I remember those endless flights of stairs and the crowds of madly smoking men in the bathrooms at intermission.

Anyway, I'm off to New York. My parents are coming up from Washington and my sister is coming over from Brooklyn. I'm by far the poorest and the most worried about money, so why shouldn't I fly the farthest and miss a few days of work to do it?

The air was warm and damp when I got to New York. I checked into my tiny room at the hotel near Lincoln Center (part of my false economy campaign) and immediately went out for a walk. Contrary to what you might think, New York is cheery and friendly around Lincoln Center at night. Crowds are leaving theaters. Others are entering bars and restaurants. There are street vendors, homeless people saying fairly funny things about how nice it must be for me to have a cashmere sweater, and the warm glow of taverns.

I went into a bar at 64th and Broadway, ordered my usual double Pellegrino straight up, and stared at the various men and women at the bar. This time, however, I noticed that they were all staring back at me. "Oh, *brother*, big, big brother," I thought. "Am I in some kind of PLO bar?"

The bartender came over to me. "Hey, are you an actor?" he asked. "Were you in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*?"

Next to me, three women cooed and giggled. They were all actors compelled by a cruel fate to work in accounting firms. They wanted to know what it's like to be a real actor, who got paid and everything. One of them, whose real name, and I'm not kidding, is Suzette, was from Abilene, Texas. She had always planned to be an actress, but lately she had decided that she would also be an opera singer. She had just started voice lessons, at the tender age of 28, and now she was about ready to conquer the world.

"The only problem," she said, "is that, like, how do you get an agent?"

"You have to be related to someone in the picture business," I said. "It's that simple."

Suzette looked thoughtful. "Are you married?" she asked.

Wednesday

A luncheon with my editor from wonderful *Barron's*, Jim Meagher. Meagher has just had heart surgery. He has lost weight. He looks fabulous, like a high school kid. We met at "21," which was filled with tough-looking types who looked as if they would sell you anything to make a rupee. We sat next to three elderly women who were haggling with the waiter about whether they could have separate checks. I had to send back my Senegalese soup. It was inedibly spicy. My chicken hash was likewise inedible. The bill for the two of us was almost $150. As a ratio of quality to cost, it ranked lower than any meal I have ever had. Maybe I just hit it on a bad day.

Still, Meagher, the world's wittiest human being, was in his usual form. He really should have been selected to succeed Johnny Carson. Without writers, without preparation, he's consistently laugh-out-loud funny.

I never remember his jokes, although they usually have something to do with Ireland.

Off to Simon & Schuster for a meeting with my editor on my book about the life and times of Michael R. Milken, an accountant from Van Nuys who really made the grade.

In the fourteenth-floor reception room, I ran into my erstwhile editor on many projects, Michael V. Korda. He looked slim and athletic, as always. I reminded him of probably the best story about bureaucracy anyone

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has ever told, which he told to me in 1976:

Korda was a cub reporter for the BBC covering the Hungarian uprising against the Bolshevists in 1956. When the Russian hordes swept back into Budapest, he was arrested and put in jail and tortured.

"How horrible," I said to him. "To be in a Russian army prison being tortured."

"It wasn't really that bad," he said. "There was only one torturer, and he was a civil servant, and he had a whole prison full of people to torture, and he wanted to get home every day at five, so he'd only spend a few minutes on each guy before moving on to the next."

Many times that story has gotten me through an IRS audit, as I told Korda. He laughed and then passed on his merry way to write more novels or edit more books or something.

At my meeting, I talked to my copy editor, a chain-smoking genius. He really knew the manuscript well, and had a lot of good ideas. It sort of breaks my heart when I see someone that smart smoking, but I guess that's what a free country is all about. It might break his heart to see me drive the way I do.

Back to the Empire Hotel, with a detour over to Park Avenue to look at briefcases. On the street, hailing a taxi, was John Gutfreund, former head of Salomon Brothers. He looked florid, excited, on edge. I don't envy him. In fact, he's in the small club of people I never envied.

New York has a somber air. In the mid 1980s, I was repelled by a certain noisome, boastful opulence. The young guys in their expensive suits with their cigars and their cagey, smug ZBT looks, the young women with their Anti-Sex League running shoes and their pearls, the endless lines of limousines for every purpose, a forty-foot limousine to pick up a pastrami sandwich for the law firm associate working at the printer on the Columbia S&L Preferred "D" prospectus, just a feeling that they had outwitted gravity and were going to suck money out of the society for the rest of time. That was New York in the 1980s, while underground, the subways went to hell, the middle class vanished to Boise, and the entire ballast of a great city went into shock or disappeared.

The piper is being paid in the 1990s, although not as badly as in Los Angeles. Oh, yes. On the streets, the shoppers look worried. The young men no longer look so smug. The homeless are everywhere, and I mean everywhere. Only in the swank restaurants do you see little islands of widows and wealthy elderly wives drinking their tea and imagining they were safe back in another decade.

I got that clue when I went back to the West Side and stopped in the new St. Regis to eyeball the new King Cole Bar. What a tragedy. Gone was that great large room which suggested lawyers and account executives and brokers stopping for two martinis in a world that still allowed the leisure of inebriation and did not consider it a crime. Gone was that luxurious feeling that some safe part of New York would last, and that it would be at the St. Regis and you could come back from a war, and it would still be there.

No, far from it. Now there's a tiny little bar, with that ridiculously outsized mural of old King Cole calling for his pipe and his bowl and his fiddlers three, looking like a whale in a child's aquarium. Now, there is a little room for old

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ladies to have tea and sandwiches and another slightly bigger room for men and women to have organic fruit salad and jicama.

Oh, brave new world of fear and health that has murdered the King Cole Bar, how strict you are.

On Central Park South, there are still beautiful women, but they look scared, not just of rapists and killers, but of everything. Of losing their jobs. Of sexual harassment on the job. Of being dissed. Of not having their creativity recognized. Of having a bad hair day.

It was only when I got back to the little nest near the Empire Hotel that I saw people who had stars in their eyes. Young actors, young danseuses. Kids hurrying to and fro with towels on their heads and *An Actor Prepares* under their arms. Their fire burns bright enough to overcome the fear that is modern city life.

Don't spit on these kids and their foolish hopes, I thought. It's a lot better to hope than not to. It's a lot better to be poor with hope than rich without, and far better to be unknown with a gleam in your eye than known without.

Dinner in Brooklyn with my sister, Rachel, world's best aphorist, who coined the most notable phrase I have heard: "Your basic human is not such a hot item."

She whirled around her apartment's commodious kitchen like Diaghilev, making a pasta here, a salad there, balsamic dressing in another bowl, broiling salmon in one oven, warming bread somewhere else, all the while talking the New York chef's mantra, in fragments: "The best balsamic vinaigrette. . . . The best store on earth, Balducci's. . . . It's not hard to do, I love doing it. . . . Eat, eat, eat, isn't it great. . . . Isn't it worth coming to Brooklyn for?"

Yes and yes and yes.

On the way back, I stopped at a bar where Bill Clinton, I had heard, was going to appear to do an Elvis impersonation. I'm not kidding. I'm really not. The bar was packed, and there were Secret Service and enthusiastic looking Clinton volunteers outside. On the sidewalk was a TV where there was a picture of the bandstand inside. Sure enough, there was Clinton, playing the trombone, looking like a drug addict jazzbo, and playing pretty well. I'm getting to like him. I especially like what Perot says about him and his sax: There's a lot more money in being a good musician than in being President. The comment says a whole helluva lot more about Perot than about Clinton, but it says enough about both.

Two Secret Service men wanted their photos taken with me, and then I walked back to the Empire Hotel through the balmy night. There was a message waiting for me from Maw that my father was having angina and that they weren't coming up to see *Guys and Dolls*.

Friday

A rushed day. Lunch in New York with Billy Kimball from the Comedy Central Channel and Al Franken, a famous comedian who appears regularly on "Saturday Night Live." Kimball was friendly and filled with jokes and asides. I have found it to be a sort of rule in the world of comedy that the people behind the camera are almost always funnier than the people in front of the camera. Franken had a hilarious line of jokes about self-help programs.

We talked about my possibly commenting on the Democratic Convention for the Comedy Central Channel. I hope it works out, although the political situation is getting to be so sad that humor commentary on it would be a little like humor commentary on a terrible bus plunge in India.

I flew down to Washington on the U.S. Air shuttle. By chance, I sat next to my old pal, Roy L. Ash, stone solid genius of the first degree, co-founder of Litton Industries. We talked about the problems with the Balanced Budget Amendment, which scares me a lot. Roy is so smart, so filled with energy, he sometimes seems to be beyond human.

At my parents' apartment at the Watergate, there was a worried feeling in the air. My father was obviously concerned about his angina. My mother was even more concerned. Still, they were happy to see me. We sat and talked for a long time, had the most Spartan dinner imaginable, and then went to watch the final episode of Johnny Carson on TV. Every few minutes, my father began to sing "See what the boys in the back room will have, and tell them I'm having the same . . ."

For some reason, it seemed sadder that Johnny would no longer be on TV at 11:30 every night than that people get older and have angina. As we watched one last time and waved one last wave, my father looked at my mother and me in the living room, which has long been flooded with newspapers and magazines, some of ten years vintage ("If I could save time in a bottle..."), he sighed and said, "I wish I could just freeze time like this, forever . . ."

"Then I might have time to go through the newspapers and throw them out," my mother said.

Tuesday

Up at 5:00 a.m. to take my father to the Washington Hospital Center's Heart Institute. He arrived and looked around for a newspaper. In no time, they had taken his blood (my own particular terror), then brought him to a room, where a veritable army of women came in to tell him about his exam and then about his diet, "lifestyle," and medication. All for a test. My mother and sister came over, and we all talked. Then my mother and sister went for lunch, and immediately the nurses came to take my father in for his angiogram.

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I followed his cart to the exam room, as he sang a few more bars of "See What the Boys in the Back Room Will Have." As I waited, I called all my different agents to see if I had any deals. Amazingly, I did, a Western Union commercial in Canada. After about an hour, a doctor came out from the examining room. He said that it wasn't so bad. My father could probably get by with rest, medicine, and a very modest diet. No bypasses today, thank you.

Sunday

Back in California, I took Mr. Perfect for a drive to Ventura. It's about forty miles north of Malibu, up the coast past the rocky cliffs of Leo Carrillo Beach, past the giant boulders of doom across from Deer Creek, past the missile park at the Naval Air Station, and thence to the far reaches of Oxnard, a beach town with an almost entirely Mexican downtown and an old movie theater advertising, just for today, *Tres Mexicanos Calientes*. First stop, however, was at Toys-R-Us, to buy Tommy a reward for being a good boy.

He dashed into the store and ran until he found the Fast Trax section. These are remote-controlled trucks and cars that can crawl over anything—"even over your big feet, Daddy," because they are on "treads, just like tanks."

Alas, they were too expensive. More or less $100, or, as Tommy said, "a hundred bucks." Instead, I bought him a G.I. Joe Battle Wagon, made in China, with a genuine missile launcher. Thirty bucks.

When I got home and took it from its box, I saw the dreaded words: "Some assembly required." Still, under the Stein Household Sexual Identity Preservation Act of 1992, we have a rule: boys do not whine except in print. We took out the parts, studied the instructions, and went to it. As I squinted and grunted assembling the missile turrret, Tommy helped by pressing his cheek against mine and saying, "Wow, is this g--damned complicated, or what?"

"Don't use that word," I said.

"Is that a bad word?"

"Yes, it's a bad word."

"But, Daddy . . ."

"It doesn't matter if I use it, it's still a bad word. I only say it when I'm upset."

Tommy snickered, but we carried on assembling, and soon the beast was done. It even fired its rockets in proper sequence, and went backwards and forwards. "Daddy," Tommy said, "is this g--damned impressive or what?"

"Watch your mouth, pal," I said. "It's impressive. That's enough."

Tommy played with his G.I. Joe Battle Wagon for a few hours and then we went off to the park to have him practice riding his two-wheeler. He's not even five yet, mind you. I put him in a grassy field and shoved his bike forward. He pedaled a little bit, and then a little more, and then he was gone—and then he fell down. I went to pick him up.

"I can do it," he said. "I can do it myself."

He picked himself up and got on and fell off. I stood back and he got on again, pushed himself to the jogging path, and started up again. He was off like a little blond rocket, going around and around the circuit as I watched. He looked straight ahead for the first few circles, and then, on the fourth time by, he turned and smiled at me. "I'm doing it myself," he said, and I felt as if I were a hundred years old and alone. ❐

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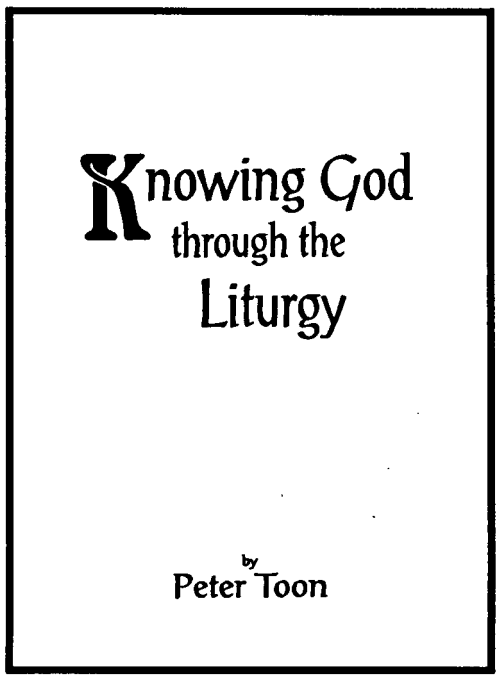

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King's Jury

by Terry Eastland

Like almost everyone else who watches television, I had seen the beating of Rodney King on videotape and concluded that the four Los Angeles police officers charged with felony assault were indeed guilty. But when the not guilty verdict was returned, I could not say the jury had been *wrong*. To make that kind of judgment I would have had to have been one of the jurors, and due regard for our jury system, a bulwark of our liberties, made me reluctant to indict them.

Few in the press demonstrated any such reluctance. Reporters covering the verdict assumed the jury was wrong, and commentators said so explicitly. The jury was seen as stupid if not also racist (King is black, the defendant officers white, and the jury had no blacks). Only Roger Parloff of the *American Lawyer* did what journalists should have done in judging the jury. Having watched most of the televised, seven-week trial, Parloff put himself in the jurors' shoes. The result, "Maybe the Jury Was Right," published in his magazine's June issue, is a unique and important piece on the King case.

Parloff begins at the beginning, with the failure of King to pull over after California Highway Patrol officers observed him speeding. They followed him for eight miles on the freeway, at speeds of almost 100 miles per hour, before finally asking L.A. police for help. What Parloff points out is that *prosecution* witnesses called to testify against the four officers verified these and other facts, such as that, having exited the freeway, King then ran stop signs and stoplights, racing around Los Angeles streets at 60 to 80 miles per hour. With numerous police cars on his rear and a police helicopter above him, King, who later tests showed was heavily intoxicated, finally stopped his car.

This is what the jury learned, yet press accounts either understated these facts (see the April 30 *New York Times*, a paper Parloff justifiably takes to task time and again) or failed to mention them altogether (Parloff cites *Time*, but there were plenty of others, especially television reports). These facts also called for some description of King other than "motorist," the term of choice in almost all press accounts.

The jury then learned that two passengers in King's car, both black, obeyed police orders by getting out of the car and assuming a prone position, whereupon they were searched for weapons, handcuffed, and later released. By contrast, King did not obey police commands, according to *prosecution* witnesses, as Parloff points out. Instead, King, standing 6 feet 3 inches tall and weighing 230 pounds, a much bigger man than any of the police officers, danced outside his car, "waving [Parloff writes] at the helicopter and wiggling his hips at the officers." Eventually he complied to the extent of "getting down on all fours," according to defense *and* prosecution witnesses. Police officers unsuccessfully tried to cuff him in that halfway position (a fact the *New York Times* did not mention in its summary of the defense case). Again according to defense *and* prosecution witnesses, as Parloff observes, "King threw or shook the officers off his arms and stood up."

Sergeant Stacey Koon, one of the four defendant officers, testified that he was frightened by this turn of events. He ordered his officers to move back so that he could use (Parloff writes) "the next level of force recommended under Los Angeles police procedures, a Taser gun." With defense *and* prosecution witnesses testifying to this point, Koon told King to get down or he would be shot with the Taser, a gun whose electric shock is powerful enough to cause most people to collapse immediately, whereupon cuffs can be applied. But King did not get down and instead moved toward Koon, who fired a first dart. Koon again warned King, who had not fallen to the ground, that he would fire a second dart if he did not get down. King refused to do that. The second dart was fired, and now King fell to the ground, all of this according to both defense *and* prosecution witnesses. The Taser part of the story, by the way, also went unreported in the *New York Times*.

The camera in the hands of the bystander began rolling at this point, but as Parloff notes, most Americans never saw the early part of the 81-second tape, all of which, of course, the jury did see. De-

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spite the Taser darts, King jumped up, wheeled around and lunged at defendant Laurence Powell—another fact unreported by the *New York Times*. King's attorney conceded that King may have been charging Powell, who struck him with his baton—apparently the first of the fifty-six blows captured on the videotape. King fell to the ground. Powell then hit King over and over, about ten times—all this, according to the tape, while King was trying to stand up. The prosecution expert on excessive force did not fault Powell for any of these blows—a commentary heard by the real jury (but not the rest of us watching the videotape before the trial).

When the camera next focused on King, he was prone. No blows were being struck. Powell and Timothy Wind, the only other officer to strike King, according to the videotape, appeared ready to use their batons if King were to get up again. The jury heard the prosecution expert on excessive force testify that from this point on further use of the batons became excessive. According to the videotape, most of blows 11 to 56 appeared to land on King's arms or legs, and *no* witness said that any of these blows struck King in the head.

Where the blows landed was a key issue. Los Angeles Police Department policy forbids striking people in the head, neck, spine, or groin with a baton—which strikes could amount to lethal force. The first blow on the videotape, by Powell, may have hit King in the head. But a prosecution witness who said that blow did in fact strike King in the head excused it on grounds of self-defense, and the prosecution expert on excessive force did not fault Powell for it. The prosecution put on a witness who testified that Powell later hit King in the head with his baton, but Parloff points out that this testimony was "out of synch with that of other prosecution witnesses" and wasn't corroborated by the videotape.

Regarding blows 11 to 56—those the prosecution expert regarded as excessive—the defense used slow-motion replays to show the jury that Powell and Wind were often pausing (Parloff writes) "to observe King's behavior." What the jury was told, basically, was that when King was out of line—reaching for his waistband (one reason the cops feared him is that he had not allowed himself to be searched) or taking positions from which he had earlier risen to his feet and approached the officers—he was struck. And when he was prone—as the officers repeatedly told him to be, according to both defense *and* prosecution witnesses—he was not struck. "Like it or not," writes Parloff, "this is what the video shows." Because King never did lie flat on the ground, he wound up being forcibly cuffed, while in a sitting position. Even at the end, he was struggling.

Parloff makes understandable the oft-ridiculed comment of one juror who said that she thought King was in control of the situation. What she meant was that King could have behaved as his passengers had—by obeying the command to lie prone. For some reason, King did not want to obey. Parloff speculates that he resisted because he didn't want to go back to prison; this was a man, after all, who was on parole, driving while intoxicated, and had played Richard Petty on the streets of Los Angeles. Whatever the reason for his resistance, it seems reasonable to conclude that the King the jury saw was the central figure in the drama; his behavior was the key to what happened.

Parloff is led to ask the bottom-line question: "Was it criminal for these officers to continue to try to force King into a prone position longer than the prosecution expert testified that a reasonable police officer would have?" Parloff hopes that, had he been one of the officers obliged to subdue King, he "would have shown the sort of courage, restraint, and presence of mind that the prosecution expert believes I should have shown. And that I would have done so even if I thought King was on PCP"—tests showed he was not, but the officers claimed they feared he was—"and even if I didn't know whether King was armed, and even if King had continued resisting after being shot with two Taser darts, and even if King had already jumped up and attacked me once. But do I believe it beyond a reasonable doubt?"

For Parloff, and I suspect for others willing to think afresh about the King case, it is reasonable *not* to believe that. Which is to say: If you put yourself in the jurors' shoes, what they decided was far from stupid. Nor did it have to stem from racial fear or stereotypes. And their verdict, as Parloff argues, may well have been right. ❐

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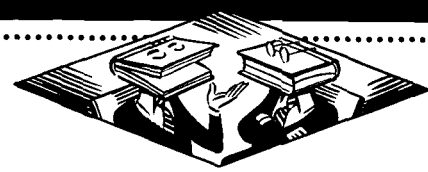

Streetcar Express

by Joe Queenan

"Sometimes," Blanche DuBois proclaims in an uncharacteristically chipper moment halfway through *A Streetcar Named Desire*, "there's God—so quickly."

Yeah, Blanche, but sometimes there isn't. Nothing else happens very quickly in Tennessee Williams's 45-year-old blabberpuss masterpiece—which runs three hours and twenty minutes in its current star-studded incarnation on Broadway—so I don't see any reason why God Almighty should break the mood and manifest Himself with an undue celerity. "Sometimes, there's God—in the sweet by and by," is what Blanche should have said as she melted into the embrace of Mitch, her newfound beau. "Sometimes, there's God—'long about suppertime."

Those three hours and twenty minutes can seem even longer if you happen to see the play on one of the increasingly frequent evenings on which Jessica Lange has called in sick. Gregory Mosher's production is a turgid affair, and the only reason it has been drawing good crowds is the allure of its two stars: the talented Jessica Lange, whose motion picture career stalled more than a decade ago, and the less talented Alec Baldwin, who seemed on direct course for stardom until he hooked up with Kim Basinger in *The Marrying Man* and then badmouthed the studio that produced it.

My wife and I were two of the many unfortunates who had moseyed on down to Times Square to see what kind of fireworks the stars of *Frances* and *Tootsie* and *Beetlejuice* and *The Hunt for Red October* could set off in person. Already down a hundred smackers for the two tickets, plus $35 for the babysitter, plus $15 for parking, plus $20 for a quick snack, I was in a foul mood when I opened my *Stagebill* to find that Blanche would be played not by the lovely woman who had once played opposite both King Kong and Dustin Hoffman, but by her lovely understudy from the Denver Center Theatre Company and "As the World Turns." It was too late to ditch our tickets and go see another play, so we decided to tough it out, curious to see whether Baldwin was a budding Brando as Stanley Kowalski.

Baldwin was okay; he has lots of muscles and chest hair, and he remembered most of his lines. He seems like a nice young man with a bright future in the talkies, but he won't make you forget Brando and he isn't talented enough to keep you from counting the hours and minutes until the show's end. The problem is that *Streetcar* was written at a time when Americans still had an attention span, when theater-goers were accustomed to interminable works from O'Neill and Ibsen and Shaw and found it exciting to spend 3.5 hours listening to Blanche's whining and Stanley's belching. They'd survived the Great Depression and were happy to be getting more bang for their buck. Today's audience, even during good productions of *Streetcar*, fidgets, plays with candy wrappers, goes to the loo, and invariably nods off during one of Blanche's countless reveries or one of Stanley's macho tirades. If something is not done soon, I suspect that Tennessee Williams will find himself getting cut out of the standard repertory, and there'll go my last chance of ever seeing Jessica Lange on stage.

There is, of course, a simple solution: Cut. If *Richard III*, which runs four and a half hours in the Elizabethan original, is always chopped by 20 percent in modern productions, why can't the same be done to *Streetcar*. Who needs all that expository material? It doesn't take much to figure out that Stanley is a pig and that Blanche is nuts. In the interests of keeping our second-best playwright in the public eye, I'd recommend the following cuts:

(1) Throughout the play, Blanche hits the sauce pretty hard. At least three drinking scenes could be cut—trimming *Streetcar* by five to ten minutes—if Blanche would ransack the Kowalski medicine cabinet for Prozac instead.

(2) A major holdup is all that time spent waiting for the supply man from Stanley's company to come back from Blanche's home town with the low-down on what she's been up to. Why not settle the question instantly by installing a fax machine in the Kowalski household and transmitting a photograph of Blanche to the manager of the Flamingo Hotel with the question, "Has this woman been entertaining a lot of male visitors in her room recently?" The use of fax would reduce the play by at least one hour.

Joe Queenan is the author of Imperial Caddy, *coming this fall from Hyperion.*

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(3) Reliance on other technologies and services not in existence forty-five years ago would also speed up matters. For example, instead of having Blanche wait a full four days to catch the next Greyhound back to Mississippi, book her on one of the many flights that now connect via Denver. She'd be out of Stanley's hair by suppertime and we could all relax. And instead of having Blanche wait for Western Union to contact her mysterious millionaire friend in Dallas, have her use E-mail. The last thing you want is to give Blanche more time to hang around and make speeches. You want her on the next plane. Time saved: three days.

(4) *Streetcar* was originally called "The Poker Night," because several major confrontations between Stanley and Blanche take place during his weekly poker game in the living room. But no one, not even working-class people, plays poker anymore. Speed things up by switching to Rotisserie League Baseball; then, after Stanley decks his wife Stella, have his buddy Mitch declare: "Rotisserie League Baseball shouldn't be played in a house with women." With all the talk these days about speeding up baseball, this is the way to go. It would also speed up marriage.

(5) But the easiest way to move *Streetcar* along is to compress Blanche's monologues through the use of contemporary terminology. So instead of having Blanche describe Stanley in this fashion—

> He acts like an animal, has an animal's habits! Eats like one, moves like one, talks like one. There's even something—sub-human—something not quite to the stage of humanity yet! Yes, something—ape-like about him, like one of those pictures I've seen in—anthropological studies! Thousands and thousands of years have passed him right by, and there he is—Stanley Kowalski—survivor of the stone age. Bearing the raw meat home from the kill in the jungle!

—let her use these terms: "Stella, I'm really sorry, but your husband is, like, dysfunctional."

Better still, have someone from the Polish Anti-Defamation League cut all the abusive remarks Blanche directs at Stanley and we can all go home in an hour and a half. ❐

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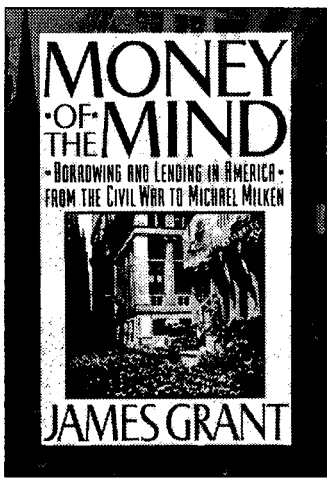

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Yesterday's Gone

by Cathy Young

Less than a year after the hardline coup in Moscow, Gorbachev, back from the United States, gives an interview to *Komsomolskaya Pravda* blasting Yeltsin for his handling of economic reform and for allegedly imposing a media blackout on his U.S. tour: How else, he grumbles, could one explain the fact that the Russian press wrote a lot less about it than did the American press? A week later, the ex-Soviet president is stripped of his government ZIL limousine and given a Volga sedan instead, the rank-and-file bureaucrat's car. Russian newspapers speculate that this is in retaliation for the interview.

Meanwhile, the Russian news agency IMA Press reports in *Izvestia* that Gorbachev is buying a house in Florida—a "standard two-story home" at 16 Senator Drive, Tropical Gulf Acres, Charlotte County, Florida, for $108,350. Maybe he'll buy himself a Mercedes to replace the ZIL.

Speaking of government limos, the May 31 segment of "60 Minutes" on continuing *nomenklatura* privilege was quite an eye-opener. Special stores where high-level officials can buy food and consumer goods at a fraction of the market price are alive and well. And then there's all the money former Communist bigshots are pumping into private businesses and joint ventures. On hand to condemn these doings was our old friend Vladimir Pozner, a great authority on people who manage to prosper under any régime.

The zest with which *nomenklatura* bosses have been reinventing themselves as democrats and/or capitalists casts a pall over the heartening, if slow, development of entrepreneurship. The "Ethics and Law" page of the *Literary Gazette* (May 27) carries an unsigned letter to the weekly's legal commentator Arkady Vaksberg (whose book *The Soviet Mafia* was reviewed in these pages last month). The correspondent, whose letter is titled "I Am Scared," says that he is more fearful of criticizing local crooks now than he was in the Brezhnev era:

> Former bosses have transformed themselves into democrats, set up firms, companies, and small businesses; even here in the boondocks, it's all Western-style, with various "funds" and "associations"—and real power is still in their hands just as it used to be. . . . Those who protest . . . are dealt with very simply, without involving any party committees, police, or prosecutors: a knife in the chest, a bullet in the heart, or something like that.

A friend of the writer's was apparently beaten and slashed in the street in broad daylight, after having written a letter to the local paper exposing the ex-manager of a state enterprise who used stolen money to open a private shop. Vaksberg notes that, while the writer relies more on feelings than facts, the feelings can't just be brushed off, especially since, judging from readers' mail, the anonymous writer is far from alone.

A similarly grim image of daily life emerges from a May article in the *Independent Gazette* by Alexander Balkovsky, "If You Are Scared, Defend Yourself." Balkovsky describes various methods denizens of the Commonwealth of Independent States use to protect themselves from ruffians in these uncertain times, including specially trained dogs (a Rottweiler costs up to 15,000 rubles, a German shepherd 2,000 to 10,000); metal doors (6,000 to 15,000); Mace (400 to 700 rubles a can) and gas pistols (about 10,000). (Stun guns, evidently, are still too rare to have a meaningful market price.)

By the end of summer, the Russian parliament will consider a draft bill on private ownership of weapons. The "necessity" of legalizing Mace and gas pistols, says Balkovsky, "is not questioned by anyone." As for guns, "the arguments of proponents and opponents are well-known: 'con'—there will be shootouts in the streets; 'pro'—an armed population will be more difficult to dominate." Advocates of putting weapons in the hands of citizens are found across the political spectrum: many "liberals" support it as a matter of individual rights, many "conservatives" as one of law-and-order.

So far, officials at the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs and members of the parliamentary commission on law and crime have only the vaguest notion of what the legislation will entail. According to one official, all that is certain is that "for the foreseeable future, instruments of self-defense will be manufactured and sold to the population by the government, and will be registered and monitored by the Ministry of Internal Affairs." Some factories already manufacture test models of Mace-like chemical spray cans and gas pistols, supposedly "more reliable than the imported self-defense weapons that are flooding our markets," and are ready to market them as soon as appropriate legislation is passed.

Meanwhile, Boris Yeltsin recently signed a decree allowing private detectives and security guards to carry guns. This is the first time, notes Balkovsky, that "the state intends to entrust weapons to people who are not in government

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Cathy Young, our regular Russian Presswatch columnist, is the author of Growing Up in Moscow *(Ticknor & Fields).*

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service." (Some officials worry that criminals will be able to get guns through these private agencies.) Private detectives will also be allowed to investigate criminal cases provided that they notify the law enforcement agencies. Few Russians will be able to take advantage of private security arrangements: one of the country's best-known private detective agencies (in another sign of the times, they have been around for a while without the benefit of laws or decrees), the Alex Agency, charges between 120 rubles and $15 an hour, depending on the services rendered. The less well-heeled, says Balkovsky, can make themselves safer by using any aerosol deodorant spray with an "Avoid Eye Contact" label, and hairspray's even better. Finally: "If you can't afford a deodorant, you can throw salt or tobacco in the hoodlum's eyes. If you can't even afford salt or tobacco, a handful of sand will do."

An Ode to the Trader

On a more optimistic note, in the same "Lifestyles" section a few days later (May 13), Evgeny Bilkis celebrates Russia's new social class: the traders. He points out that gypsies, who used to sell rare consumer goods all over Moscow, have either disappeared or melted into the crowds of ethnically undifferentiated peddlers. Nor are Central Asians and Caucasus natives—other groups traditionally scorned as traders in the old Soviet days—very prominent in the markets that have sprung up around the Russian capital. The same "grannies" who used to curse at the damned profiteers have now joined their ranks: there they are, selling their rainy-day stockpiles (coffee, canned foods, even cheese and butter—until the city authorities recently banned street sales of perishables, claiming danger of food poisoning). "It seems that all it took for our eternally victimized, charmingly impractical Russian people to enlist as merchants," writes Bilkis, "was *official permission*. And then it's full speed ahead—not one peep about honor or conscience."

Young people are selling too, "hanging about stacks of beer cases and sipping beer themselves, chatting and flirting with fellow vendors. . . . No one tries to teach them how to live their lives. No one demands to know why strong, able-bodied young people like them are not welding steel or wielding sledgehammers." Gone are the days of shadowy trading spots where hobbyists traded rare books, radio parts, stamps or coins, always ready to disperse at the command of a militiaman; gone are the old flower ladies fleeing in fear; gone is the shamefaced profiteer of yesteryear with his "furtive, guilty look, whispered offers, and stooped shoulders. . . . It's all a thing of the past now."

Day of the Living Dead

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, once known as Forever Alive, had his 122nd birthday on April 22, the first since the collapse of his creation. A couple of days in advance, about a thousand of the faithful gathered by the Lenin museum with flowers for their chief, where they were confronted by some protesters, one carrying a poster captured by a *Kommersant* photographer: "COMMIES REPENT!" In the Moscow daily *Kuranty*, the fervidly anti-Communist columnist Aleksandr Ivanov offered a survey of his mail on the subject of Lenin, awarding first prize to a letter from a retired gentleman who branded Vladimir Ilyich "a traitor to his country, a hypocrite, and a demagogue." Second prize went to a letter from an eighth-grader named Masha, who had read in some Russian version of the *National Enquirer* a story about an archeologist raped and impregnated by the 500-year-old mummy of an Inca chief. "Now," wrote Masha, "I am afraid to visit the Mausoleum on Red Square."

The leader and teacher was accorded somewhat more reverential treatment in the moderately pro-Communist former CPSU periodicals surveyed by *Kommersant* (April 20-27). The weekly *Glasnost* describes Lenin as "a man of tragic fate whose soul was illuminated from on high with superhuman wisdom and the highest nobility," a characterization whose mystical overtones should have made the birthday boy turn in his Mausoleum. In the weekly *Moskvichka*, loyal Leninist Natalya Morozova (see *TAS*, August 1990) defends the great man from charges of destroying the clergy: "Let's set the record straight: it's not just priests who were shot, but only those priests who collaborated with the White Guards. Was it cruel? Of course. But if you are a man of God, you should keep to religious activities."

And in *Pravda* (April 23), commentator V. Bushin looks at Lenin's first two months in power and compares them favorably to Yeltsin's. Yeltsin, you see, took some time off to vacation in the Crimea, while Lenin worked indefatigably, chairing meetings, making reports and speeches, giving pep talks to factory workers and so on. Comrade Bushin unaccountably neglects to mention the fact that Lenin also had plenty of people shot and jailed and plenty of newspapers shut down—and don't you think that wasn't hard work.

Meanwhile, the tri-weekly *Vechernyi Klub* or Evening Club, a supplement to the daily *Vechernyaya Moskva*, reports (April 16) that Chelyabinsk sociologist Dmitry Mityukov has developed a unique method of identifying a Bolshevik type of personality, a secret he sells for just ten rubles. After he advertised in *Argumenty i Fakty*, Mityukov was deluged with mail. Ninety percent of the letter-writers wanted to test someone else for Bolshevik tendencies; only five percent wanted to test themselves. ❐

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Lies We Live

by James Bowman

As I was coming out of *Housesitter*, directed by Frank Oz, I overheard someone say: "Well, that's nice, isn't it? Glorifying a pathological liar!" I have since read critics who have taken this view of the film. Now, I like to think of myself as rather unfashionably attached to the idea of objective truth, but I can't help thinking that these people have rather missed the point about *Housesitter* (whose title is itself a lie, the picture having nothing whatever to do with housesitters). Goldie Hawn's moving into Steve Martin's dream house and telling everybody that she is his wife is not meant to glorify lying but to make the point that pretending to be something we're not is a way of becoming what we want to be.

Is that lying? Well, yes and no. Art itself is a lie—which is why Plato, who makes Jesse Helms look like Andy Warhol, objected to it—but, paradoxically, it is a lie in the service of truth. So is the role-playing we have to engage in in order to learn good behavior. From Hamlet's injunction to his mother to "assume a virtue if you have it not" to "Whistle a happy tune" ("for when I fool the people I fear I fool myself as well") it has been widely recognized that the mask you put on, whether for good reasons or bad, tends to stick to your face. The lie becomes a kind of retroactive truth.

Housesitter, of course, goes way over the top and makes virtually every lie freely convertible into truth. But overstatement, especially in comedy, can help to make the point. Martin and Hawn become husband and wife through pretending to be husband and wife; the street people she persuades to masquerade as her parents begin to treat her like parents, and in the end their own house is being built adjacent to that of the newlyweds. They too have become, at least in one sense, what they only pretended to be.

And that much is true, even if the rest is lies. In love you have to believe it is true before it can become true. It is significant that the story Goldie Hawn makes up to account for her imaginary romance makes the same point: she claims that she had met Martin after a car accident that resulted in her face being swathed in bandages. He had proposed, she says, and actually married her before seeing what she looked like. He had to take the risk of believing before he could know. Likewise, the girl who jilted Martin (Dana Delany) only realizes that he is lovable after someone else has taken the risk of loving him, when she can see him, as she says, through *her* eyes.

All this is rather like what St. Augustine says about faith in God: that we must believe in order to know, rather than expecting to base our belief upon our knowledge. Unfortunately, Hollywood is not so good with faith as it can be, from time to time, with love. *Sister Act* also has as its central idea someone learning to believe by pretending to be a believer. Whoopi Goldberg plays a lounge singer who witnesses a murder and, in order to avoid being killed before she can testify against its perpetrator, goes to hide out in a convent. By pretending to be a nun she acquires some of the faith of the real nuns, and, this being Hollywood, the real nuns are depicted as having learned from Ms. Goldberg not only how to boogie but also how to break out of their cloister into "the community."

Somebody ought to tell the director, Emile Ardolino, that he is not the first person to have thought of bringing pop music into church or turning nuns into hip, happening gals and social workers. It's been tried before—and with results that do *not* include the transformation of run-down urban neighborhoods into hotbeds of devotion. That's what happens here, however, when Whoopi teaches her night-club shtick, a pastiche of the girl groups of the sixties, to the choir. "My Guy" (rendered as "My God") and "I Will Follow Him" (about guess Who) are done affectingly, it is true, but their power for me is based upon the innocence and wholesomeness of such devotion, whether to a teenage boy or to God Almighty, which thirty years later has become mere camp. Nobody really *believes* that stuff, says *Sister Act*, but it's great to get together, in the presence of the Pope if possible, clap our hands to the old tunes, and try to remember what it was like to believe.

There are, it seems, limitations on our ability to become what we impersonate. We can go crazy, for instance. The character played by Jeff Goldblum in *The Favor, the Watch and the Very Big Fish* believes at various times that he is Chopin, Schubert, Johann Strauss, and Jesus. Bob Hoskins, who plays a Parisian photographer of devotional subjects, is responsible for the last delusion by casting him as Jesus in his tableaux. It is then reinforced by a freak accident which makes him think he has restored a blind boy's sight. Unfortunately, it turns out that he can only walk on water for five or six steps before sinking out of sight for good.

The point is that there is a kind of power in his madness, just as there is in Goldie Hawn's lies, to make the world seem in fact, at least for a moment, what we know someone is only pretending that it is. And that this power is not necessarily a bad thing. At one point, a

James Bowman, The American Spectator*'s movie critic, is the American editor of the* Times Literary Supplement.

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woman Goldblum meets on the Paris metro says: "Now there's a man who could really save the world." When he asks, "Do you really think so?" she replies: "Of course. I'm too busy, but you could do it. Why not have a try?" And so he does. It's too bad the film itself is too busy—too busy being wacky in the Monty Python vein—to pursue the subject any further. It does have its funny moments, but the collection of gags, which seem to promise some overarching meaning really don't have very much to do with one another—any more than the favor, the watch and the very big fish do.

More successful is the Australian film, *Proof*, by Jocelyn Moorhouse, which concentrates on doubt rather than faith. The story concerns a blind photographer called Martin (Hugo Weaving), whose photos are to him evidence that the world really is as he imagines it. To his friend, Andy (Russell Crowe), who describes the photographs to him, he says that they are "proof that what I sensed is what you saw, through your eyes. Proof of the truth." Blindness here is a metaphor for the darkness in which we must all make our leap of faith, and the blind man is the man who refuses to make it, who insists on verifying everything and trusting no one.

Obviously, the guy's got problems. As a child he believed that his mother was lying to him when she described the world he was so curious to see. When she asked, "Why would I do that?" he replied, "Because you can." Later, when she died, he came to believe that they had buried an empty coffin, and that she had simply gone away because she was embarrassed by him. As an adult he cruelly spurns his housekeeper, Celia (Genevieve Picot), who is in love with him, on the grounds that "I know if I never give her what she wants she can never pity me; instead I can pity her." Having failed to win his trust, however, Celia becomes as cruel as he is and as untrustworthy as he imagines everyone to be.

Only Andy does he learn to trust, and Andy, who describes himself as "a black sheep," is only averagely trustworthy. At a crucial moment, when Martin is insisting on the importance of truth to him, Andy says, "Everybody lies. You tell the truth, Martin; your whole life is the truth. Have some pity on the rest of us." Ultimately, to the central question of Martin's life—"How can I know that you are telling me the truth?"—the only answer is Andy's: "You can't." That Martin learns to trust after all in spite of—or perhaps because of—the fact that Andy has deceived him is too neat and easy an ending, however. For me the film's power resides in its image of the man without trust. He is the man for our times.

Alone in an empty universe, that well-scrutinized character has only fleeting contacts with others in taxicabs. That, at any rate, is the premise of the Movie of the Month, Jim Jarmusch's *Night on Earth*. This is a collection of five vignettes of Los Angeles, New York, Paris, Rome, and Helsinki as seen from five different taxicabs on the same night. The only thing binding the five stories together thematically is that a moment of human contact takes place

where it is unexpected, but the subtext is that the contact can take place at all because of the confessional-like anonymity of the setting—and Jarmusch's Roman cab literally becomes a confessional. One way to make intimacy trust-free (and therefore risk-free) is to engage in it with people you know you will never see again.

In the Los Angeles story a casting agent (Gena Rowlands) offers her cabbie (Winona Ryder) the chance to be a movie star and is told no thanks, she would rather be a mechanic. In New York it is the fare (Giancarlo Esposito) who ends up driving the cab. "It's not allowed," says the East German cabbie (Armin Mueller-Stahl), who has not yet mastered the difficulties of an automatic transmission. "Of course it's allowed," says Esposito. "This is New York." In Paris the West African driver tries to undercharge a blind girl who has satisfied some of his shy curiosity about what it is like to be blind, but she briskly puts him right. In the hilarious Roman episode the driver, played by Robert Benigni, decides that it is time to make the confession of his life when he picks up a priest—who promptly dies as he recites his hilarious tale of sex with pumpkins, sheep, and his sister-in-law.

In each case there is a reversal of expectations which leads to an exchange of confidences between strangers. Each is wry, funny, and poignant, yet each is also brought carefully to an end by Jarmusch as the transaction is completed, and the fare steps back into the night. There is a sadness, an incompleteness about each, as if intimacy is to be forever reduced to such occasional intense moments shining out of the vast sea of night on earth—as perhaps it is. And that image of the night is just the local name for the vast night of space, which is where Jarmusch starts from as he gradually zeroes in on the blue ball of earth over the opening credits.

It is the climactic Helsinki episode which I think makes his point best. Two drunks tell their driver (Matti Pellonpaa) of the bad luck of their companion, Aki, asleep in the corner, who has just lost his job, found out that his unmarried daughter is pregnant, and been told by his wife that she is leaving him. "What could be worse than that?" they ask, so he tells them his own sad story about an inability to love until it was too late. The drunks are so affected by it that they are forced to agree that Aki, whom they have been comforting, is a miserable whiner, crying over nothing, and they put him out on the street.

Poor Aki, sitting in the snow and wondering where friends, family, home, all intimacy have got to, is as alone as it is possible to be. He is Jarmusch's hero and he is mine. Beside such loneliness, even the imaginary intimacy of Goldie Hawn looks pretty good. ❐

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LEONARDO: DISCOVERING THE LIFE OF LEONARDO DA VINCI

Serge Bramly

HarperCollins/493 pages/$35

reviewed by ALGIS VALIUNAS

Dying, and having turned already to the Christian God Whom he had managed to sidestep most of his life, Leonardo da Vinci asked forgiveness for the scant attention he had given his true vocation, recognizing "how much he had offended God by not working on his art as much as he should have." Nine completed paintings were all he had to show. His genius had led him elsewhere than to the palette and the unfinished canvas. Every aspect of nature begged him to turn his mind in its direction. "*Facil cosa è farsi universale*," he declared, while still young; it is an easy thing to make yourself a universal man, and the entire universe held him in rapture. His passion became to know nature, and to conquer nature when possible; he loved the contemplative life, and the life of a man of action, more than he did his painting. In the conflict between genius and genius, knowing the world took precedence over rendering it.

The loss seems largely ours now, rather than his; one wishes Leonardo had been more of a maker and less of a thinker, but who will deny genius its choice? Yet what he failed to make of himself tormented him. Periodically, in his notebooks, when he was getting the hang of a new pen, he would write, "Tell me if anything has ever been achieved; tell me"; "Tell me if I have ever done anything that . . ." The bitterness of failure never quite left his tongue; the losses were many, and they could not be made good. Grand projects went bust all over the place, and men of lesser gifts surpassed him in the world's admiration. Being just the sort of genius he was was a kind of miscreancy; the proportions were all wrong, making forced labor out of what ought to have been effortless motion.

Leonardo: Discovering the Life of Leonardo da Vinci, a new biography by the French novelist Serge Bramly, touchingly documents, in an appropriately reverential tone, the life of so great a man and his continual failures. Bramly's is a sad account of the most remarkable man in a remarkable time who, for all his talents, lived and died unfulfilled. Scholarly without being overbearing, handsomely written without being facile, this biography is a fine introduction to one of the greatest lives ever lived, however short of perfection that life might have been.

Born in 1452, the illegitimate son of Ser Piero da Vinci, a notary, Leonardo came to Florence at the age of 17 and became an apprentice in the *bottega* or workshop of Andrea del Verrocchio, sculptor by appointment to the Medici, and an able painter, engineer, and goldsmith besides. The first major project of Verrocchio's that Leonardo may have taken part in was the capping of the Duomo with a ball and cross. As Bramly puts it, "From the start, he witnessed the harnessing of artistry to skilled engineering." Apprenticeship was a long and exacting process, and in the beginning Leonardo was limited to scut work: making paintbrushes, stretching canvases, mixing pigments. Patrons called upon Verrocchio for ceremonial occasions, and the shop made masks, costumes, stage sets; it was especially renowned for catering jousting tournaments. By 1472, Leonardo had proved himself sufficiently to take a hand in painting, and the kneeling angel he produced for Verrocchio's *Baptism of Christ* was a measure of his talent: its beauty so nonplussed his master that he vowed never to paint again.

No one had had an eye quite like Leonardo's before. One page full of cats, shown from all angles, sleeping, preening, tumbling, stalking, reveals the power of his gaze, and the quickness of his pen. He did the first landscape drawing in the history of Western art in 1473, a Tuscan scene "in vivid detail, as if to etch it forever in memory, as if it represented in the artist's secret heart the setting for some great emotion." A masquerade costume, a hanged man, sexual intercourse shown in section, profiles of old men and young: all the world was fair game, and the sketches flowed abundantly from his pen.

When it came to painting, however, he balked, grew timid. *The Adoration of the Magi*, a large altarpiece, his first effort in the grand manner, bogged down in unfinished business. (Nevertheless, Bernard Berenson said it was "a great masterpiece and perhaps the *quattrocento* produced nothing greater.") The sixteenth-century painter Vasari wrote in his *Lives of the Artists* that "the reason [Leonardo] failed was that he endeavored to add excellence to excellence and perfection to perfection."

In Milan, where he went in 1481, shortly after failing to finish the *Adoration*, he undertook to sculpt the greatest equestrian monument ever, a *cavallo grandissimo* standing twenty-five feet high, in honor of Ludovico da Sforza's late father, Francesco, former Duke of Milan. A magnificent clay model was made, but the ambition to cast it in bronze, and in a single piece, exceeded even Leonardo's capacity. Marauding French soldiers knocked the clay statue to pieces.

There were other notable failures. During the nineteenth century, a masterful but incomplete *St. Jerome* was discovered in Rome, in pieces, by Cardinal Fesch, one of Napoleon's uncles; the head turned up in a second-hand store, the rest in a cobbler's shop, nailed to the bench. *The Battle of Anghiari*, a fresco for the Florentine Council Chamber that Bramly calls "as violent, brutal, and terrible" as any picture ever made, was lost

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when the wall where it was to be painted was treated with the wrong undercoating. In 1501, his cartoon for *Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* drew huge crowds of admirers when it was put on display for two days. The admiration, however, failed to prompt Leonardo ever to finish the job.

Surely Leonardo felt disappointment at these projects gone awry, but he must have been relieved too, of a burden of anxious boredom: painting did not consume him, and at a certain point in the work his interest in it began to wane. His mental habits seem an odd blend of relentlessly focused intensity and perpetual distraction. All the world interested him, and the concentration required for making paintings tore him from his multifarious intellectual passions. His failures were an inevitable part of his sort of genius.

His genius desired to take in everything, and he went about educating himself in the piecemeal, even haphazard, manner of the autodidact. When he dissected criminal corpses in the medical schools, he devised a method of keeping his fingernails clean. He also provided the first description of arteriosclerosis. Considering himself a "*uomo senza lettere*," an unlettered man, he set himself to learn Latin when he was over 40. He improved or invented musical instruments; some say the violin is his making. Offering his services to the Duke of Milan in 1481, he presented himself as a man skilled in the technology of war: he claimed to be adept at building portable bridges; drying up moats; destroying a fortress "even if it is built on rock"; casting mortars; noiselessly digging secret tunnels; making "fire-throwing engines, of beautiful and practical design"; and in time of peace, sculpting in marble, bronze, and clay, "[giving] perfect satisfaction and [being] the equal of any man in architecture," and painting "as well as any man, whoever he be." (Bramly admonishes that Leonardo might be blowing smoke about his accomplishments; these military skills were yet only potential.)

As the art of war was the most important of arts in Renaissance Italy, it was the natural form for someone aspiring to the highest artistic mastery. Yet most of the work Leonardo did for the Duke of Milan was peaceable enough. Bramly lists among his early works

> an olive press; counterweights to make a door close automatically; candelabras . . . ; a variable-intensity table lamp and another which would produce a very bright light; some folding furniture; locks for chests; mirrors (in particular, the octagonal mirror that would multiply indefinitely the image of a man standing inside it, which he may have used for his self-portrait); a therapeutic armchair; a bathhouse and a washhouse; a crane for emptying ditches.

Elevated to the rank of ducal engineer, Leonardo took a great part in putting on the numerous festivals that kept the court

amused. Much of his work was ephemeral, then, for only by chance might some drawing survive.

It was not until twenty years later, and under another master, that he got the chance to practice the art of war. Appointed military engineer to Cesare de Borgia, he made the acquaintance of Niccolò Machiavelli, the secretary of the Florentine Republic. Leonardo did not work long in Cesare's employ. With Machiavelli's blessing, Leonardo began a canal project designed to end the war between Florence and Pisa, and he received a commission to paint a huge battle scene (the never-to-be-finished *Battle of Anghiari*). The engineering proposal was to divert the Arno above Pisa, cutting off its water supply and closing its estuary harbor, in order to win a bloodless victory. After six months of repeated failure, the project was abandoned. Nevertheless, inspired by the Milanese system of waterways, he continued to work on his own, planning a canal from Florence to the sea with a riverside assemblage of mills—saltpeter, silk, paper—creating a prosperity never before imagined. The smoke from this project joined that of other schemes in a noxious cloud of failure.

Yet Leonardo's persistence in this work—once again in Milan, he made great improvements in the system of canal locks—shows an undaunted spirit. His obsession was the mastery of nature; he was, with Machiavelli, with Francis Bacon, one of the founders of modernity, "for the relief of man's estate." He sought to calm the tumultuous waters into a domesticated stream. Machiavelli wrote of a hurricane that struck the Val d'Arno, including the Vinci district, in 1456: "By this example God wishes to bring back into men's hearts the memory of his might." Machiavelli does not often speak of God, and when he does it is to emphasize the divine power to take life away just as He had given it. Leonardo was to fight back against this terrifying power. "He bends, corrects, *dominates* Nature," Bramly writes.

Estranged though Leonardo was from Christian piety, he was however not without natural piety. Of the human eye, he wrote in his notebooks, "This is where human discourse turns toward the contemplation of the divine." Science is a way of knowing Him "who invented so many marvelous things." To know the world is to love it, so thrilling is the passion for knowledge. The desire to be left alone with his work—in optics, hydraulics, astronomy, geology, anatomy, mathematics—coexists in a philosopher's untiring happiness with the need to serve the human good where nature presses it harshly. This ambivalence—personal ecstasy set against public benefit—is the great issue of philosophy both

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during and after the Renaissance. The terms of this internal struggle are severe. It is not always compassion that Leonardo shows toward his human brethren:

> How many people there are who could be described as mere channels for food, producers of excrement, fillers of latrines, for they have no other purpose in the world; they practice no virtue whatsoever; all that remains after them is a full latrine.

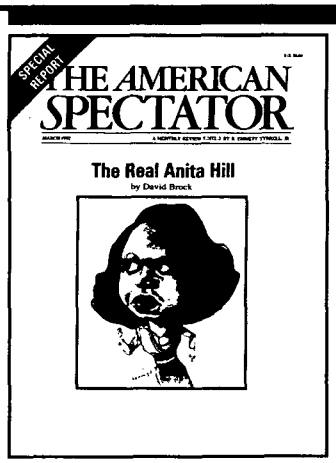
This pungent misanthropy casts a pall over the public-spirited good intentions of the scientist-inventor-benefactor. His real love is elsewhere than in the mass of men his projects shall serve.

This love did not belong to his art, either, yet something has to be said of the gift he had and the use he put it to. "Curiosity and the desire of beauty—these are the two elementary forces in Leonardo's genius; curiosity often in conflict with the desire of beauty, but generating in union with it, a type of subtle and curious grace." So wrote Walter Pater in his essay on Leonardo in *The Renaissance*. (It is a brilliant essay, except for the most famous part, his magniloquent twaddle about the *Mona Lisa*.) Curiosity accounts for the numberless superb sketches and studies in his notebooks, many of them with decidely unbeautiful subjects. It is in the paintings that curiosity and beauty coalesce, provided always that Leonardo remained curious enough about what was to come of the picture to consider it worth finishing. Bramly writes:

> His ideal would consist of imagining the picture and getting someone else to paint it; invention was what mattered most to him. Painting was above all "a thing of the mind." As he clearly put it, "To reflect is noble, to realize is servile."

Only his hand and eye could have realized the extant paintings, however. The face of the angel Uriel in the *Virgin of the Rocks* is of the most exquisite spiritual beauty ever painted. The large liquid eyes, heavy lidded, take in the prayerful exchange between the infant Christ and John the Baptist with sublime gravity, high joy laced with sorrow at the suffering to come. The portrait of Cecilia Gallerani holding an ermine shows a sullen young woman, nervy but reined-in, with a handsome domesticated creature that she is calming for the moment but whose taut poised body bespeaks every inclination to turn feral. The bright splash of light on the ermine's muzzle highlights its fierce animal strangeness, while the lighting of the woman's face shows a pallid indifference; the force of her buried life lies in the mastering curve of her hand that holds back the ermine. "Give your figures an attitude that reveals the thoughts your characters have in their minds," Leonardo wrote, as his by-word. Of course, the most famous painting in the world is precisely not revealing. Bramly calls enigma "the true subject" of the *Mona Lisa*. The tender repose of the figure, the kind wisdom of her eyes, have inspired commentators to gush forth reams of speculation about her meaning. It is a face to be stared at, in wonder, but not one to be figured out. No one else could have painted it.

So much that no one else could have painted never will be done. How does one speak of the life Leonardo lived, without making the fatal mistake of condescension? What did his life amount to, when he neglected or abandoned his talent as a painter yet managed to produce a masterpiece with most every painting he finished? Compared with any artist of his time, even Michelangelo, Leonardo is the supreme figure. Compared with, say, Shakespeare, however, Leonardo's accomplishment seems somewhat stunted. The notebooks are a relic of genius, but the myriad observations, sketches, projects never undertaken that one finds therein reveal a fragmented life even in the attempt to comprehend everything. To attempt to comprehend everything, from flower to star, and to turn that understanding into art was the genius of Shakespeare; his oeuvre stands without peer, and makes his entire life seem a work of art. Still, it is only by comparison with the greatest artist who ever lived that Leonardo's life seems lacking. Our only real complaint is that he did not leave us more. ❐



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THE SEVEN FAT YEARS: AND HOW TO DO IT AGAIN

Robert L. Bartley

The Free Press/347 pages/$29.95

reviewed by ROBERT D. NOVAK

Robert L. Bartley's moderate demeanor and measured prose disguise a true radical who specializes in demolishing myths. He has now delivered an assault on the conventional wisdom whose careful reading would benefit politicians in general and Bill Clinton, Ross Perot, and George Bush in particular.

In *The Seven Fat Years*, he minimizes the perils of deficit spending, laughs off obsessive concern with the trade balance, disputes the notion that the poor are getting poorer, and even questions the utter villainy of Michael Milken. Most important, he defends the prosperity—"the fat years" that began under President Reagan and ended under President Bush—which has been so vigorously defamed by Democrats and so poorly defended by Republicans.

As editor of the *Wall Street Journal*, Bartley played a vital supporting role in the supply-side movement that made possible the Reagan revolution. Without that august newspaper lending its prestige, the radical notion of cutting taxes would have lacked credibility.

Now, in his first book, Bartley faces a more daunting task: to remind Americans that the economic policies of Ronald Reagan and Paul Volcker saved the nation and the West from economic disasters caused by calamitous U.S. policies that climaxed under Jimmy Carter. It is difficult to imagine anybody else presenting so thorough and yet engrossing a rebuttal of the conventional wisdom.

In contrast to the gloom peddled by today's politicians, Bartley sees the U.S. standing "athwart the world" as it did after World War II, with the promise of not only another seven fat years but "a new golden age." He poses a grim alternative: "If the nation allows itself to slip back to the failed policies and crabbed attitudes that led to the crisis of the '70s, it will stumble economically and wither spiritually. The United States will have forsaken the birthright of history."

Bartley sets the beginning of the fat years—actually seven years, eight months—in 1983, when Reagan's tax cut belatedly took effect, after being delayed for two years by deficit-obsessed administration officials and members of Congress. He sets the end in 1990, when George Bush told the American people they should no longer read his lips because he would increase taxes.

His description of these boom years is a desperately needed corrective, one neglected by a Bush Administration that seems determined to forget its Reaganite past. The Reagan boom saw the American economy grow by a third, so that "the American economic machine had in effect built a whole new West Germany." Contrary to the canard that the Reagan tax cuts had stripped bare the economy, tax receipts actually grew faster than the economy during his tenure. Under Reagan, the United States "was the wealthiest society on earth, indeed the wealthiest society in the history of mankind."

Bartley has only facts and reason to support his thesis, and runs against an interpretation that is ceaselessly propagated by the news media, promoted by Democrats, and glumly confirmed by all too many Republicans. It is no trivial problem, as described by Bartley:

> As the 1990s dawned . . . the economic thrust was momentarily checked by curious political and psychological forces. In the midst of success, American elites were infatuated with failure. Economic progress was denied and its lessons derided. Any setback was exaggerated and even celebrated. As the decade progresses, the economy will repeatedly strain at the reins of pessimism and bids ultimately to prevail as economic forces shaped the First Industrial Revolution. But for the 1990s, there is a danger. Over the short run of a decade or so, a kind of pessimism can become self-realizing.

To avert this danger, Bartley attempts to dislodge false notions that have become holy writ, thanks to the false prophets headed by David Stockman. The deficit is a "grossly overrated" statistic that affects neither interest rates nor investment and is no measure of a burden left to our children. Deficit mania, he makes clear, blurs the purpose for which the money is borrowed—there's a qualitative difference between spending on infrastructure that will last for decades and spending on socially corrosive welfare handouts.

Deficit mania, Bartley writes, "may lead us to do dumb things, like trying to fight recessions by increasing taxes"—as Bush did in 1990 to end the seven fat years. It also, he makes clear, delayed the Reagan tax cut so that Chairman Volcker's inflation-killing tight-money policy at the Federal Reserve kicked in two years early and forced an agonizing recession.

International trade statistics are deemed even more spurious. The supposed trade deficit, Bartley writes, can be self-financed by foreign purchases of U.S. securities and reduced U.S. bank lending abroad. He gives the impression that the best way to cut the trade deficit is to stop trying to calculate it, since the figures are removed from reality anyway.

Unlike the Bush Administration, Bartley takes on the "fairness" argument, contending that its advocates would have government "protect the losers" when instead it should "reward the winners." Statistics intended to show income distribution becoming ever more skewed are "fictitious," neglecting both the distributional effects of government spending and how changes in tax policy will affect taxpayer behavior. Once the bogus numbers are plugged in, "the test of fairness is not whether the top fifth of taxpayers

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pay more tax, but whether they pay a larger percentage of their income."

Bartley is most daring in assailing the conventional wisdom about "greed," not only during the seven fat years but throughout American history. He asserts that Jay Gould and Samuel Insull, stigmatized as blackguards, in fact embodied the American entrepreneurial spirit; a bit hesitatingly, he puts Michael Milken in the same category.

Milken is described as "ensnared by far larger social forces and resentments, like Gould and Insull before him." All are accused of "consummate greed," but Bartley adds that "capitalism runs on the acquisitive instinct; indeed, this has been the historical critique of capitalism itself." The critics include supposed pillars of capitalism: Cornelius Vanderbilt against Gould, the Morgan circle against Insull. Bartley suggests that Milken's "biggest mistake was to threaten entrenched financial interests, above all the jobs of corporate chieftains." The editor of the *Wall Street Journal* unflinchingly places himself on the side of "the college dropouts, breakaway engineers and illegal immigrants who provided the impetus for the Seven Fat Years" and against the captains of the Fortune 500.

Bartley departs from his usual candor in dealing with *Journal* reporter James Stewart, whose best-selling *Den of Thieves* is an egregious hatchet job on Milken and a whitewash of the government's prosecutorial excess that is deplored in *The Seven Fat Years*. In trying to bridge the vast ideological gap between the newspaper's editorial columns (which Bartley controls) and its news columns (which Stewart typifies), Bartley in desperation cites as evidence of "Stewart's reportorial honesty" one sentence in the epilogue of Stewart's book that politely "calls into question the wholesale criminalization of the securities laws" after 443 pages of praising that process.

Bartley also swallows in part President Bush's feeble defense of his 1990 breach of faith on taxes on grounds that he could not afford the turmoil of the alternative—a Gramm-Rudman sequester of funds—at a time when he was preparing for war with Saddam Hussein.

But Bartley quickly makes amends in characteristically unequivocal language. Bush is the product of "Republican bloodlines," as are his principal lieutenants in government. "Men from privileged backgrounds are not likely to be comfortable arguing that 'fairness' is bunk," he writes, adding that "the social background of the Bush decision-makers is a handicap in dealing with . . . the decline of the entrepreneur."

Bartley concludes that it is up to America whether it wants another seven fat years. "Does it really deplore a decade of greed and seek atonement in a decade of envy?" he asks. "For the nation shall also have its way if seven lean years is what it truly wants." The problem is that so few political leaders understand that we have this choice, and none of them is running for President. ❐

MONEY OF THE MIND: BORROWING AND LENDING IN AMERICA FROM THE CIVIL WAR TO MICHAEL MILKEN

James Grant

Farrar, Straus & Giroux/513 pages/$27.50

reviewed by JOE MYSAK

Very few people go into journalism thinking they are going to write about finance. Most believe they will write about cats in trees and fires and robberies, before graduating to the city hall beat or some foreign bureau, and then moving on to columnist or a spot at *Esquire* or the *New Yorker.* They believe it with a naïveté that is touching, but the fact is that, during the 1990s, what jobs remain in the shrinking field of print journalism will be in business writing, in one fashion or another.

The proliferation of business publications was another product of the Reagan boom, and it is not over yet. There are more business journals, but not more business journalists. One would imagine that, just as a shortage of catchers a few years back led some outfielders to don the Tools of Ignorance in hopes of making it to the majors, so would a few sportswriters sit down with a *Barron's Dictionary of Banking Terms* and prepare to decipher annual reports. I'm not holding my breath.

The business journalist must first master a language that is in most cases *designed* to elude comprehension, then translate it into something approximating English for the daily consumption of readers. As a result, most business writers rely on entire blocks of clauses that, considered in tranquility, are little more than automatic writing. Or they degenerate into masses of insider jargon. Such writers invariably fall back on the My Readers excuse: *They know what it means,* such rascals say. This may and often does fool the boss, but it is not professionally satisfying over the long haul.

Many of the survivors—those who understand what they write and have a knack for conveying it to the layman—soon figure out that all their sources make ten times what they do. As good writers leave the profession, another wave of journalism rookies dashes on to the beach of the business pages—or worse, the trade journals.

It need not be so grim. I recall the advice Tom O'Hara of the *Palm Beach Post* gave once, when trying to break up one of those interminable newsroom fights: *Guys, this is not brain surgery.* In business, things are rarely as complicated as some people would have you believe. It is axiomatic that when a reporter uses the weasel word "complex," as in *This is a complex financing,* he has not taken the time to unravel things.

I have told more than one rookie at my newspaper, "Write like Jim Grant." If

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they would learn the craft of business writing, attain professional contentment, and raise the level of business journalism in general, give them Grant's *Money of the Mind.* Grant, founder and editor of the fortnightly *Grant's Interest Rate Observer* and author of a 1983 biography of Bernard Baruch, is the finest business journalist working today. He writes about a subject that confounds most readers, and writes so that they understand it.

While most business journalists are loath to define their terms, Grant defines every term he uses, and his definitions are models of grace. Take this, on commercial paper, for example. "Commercial paper is a corporate IOU maturing, typically, in 90 days. Unlike a mortgage, it is an unsecured debt. The claim of the lender is against the general credit of the issuing corporation, not specifically against its railcars, real estate, or inventories."

Someday, one of Grant's faithful readers will anthologize his common-sense business aphorisms. Until then, collectors are on their own. Readers of *Money of the Mind* will find the following:

> Progress in financial affairs is cyclical, not cumulative. Putting a man on the moon, scientists had stood on the shoulders of giants. Overlending to Penn Central, bankers had re-created the errors of their fathers.
>
> No inflation lasts forever.
>
> In markets, history repeats itself but not so literally as to enrich historians.
>
> The law of entropy in corporate finance holds that every good idea must be taken to an extreme.

In *Money of the Mind,* Grant tells how we got from there to here—"there" being just after the Civil War, when credit was based on individual responsibility and liquidity, and "here" being the 1980s, when all of that was thrown overboard. He adds a brief coda bringing us up to the present, when the credit welfare state is apparently being toppled. He does not, incidentally, get around to defining his intriguing title until late in the game, when describing the junk bond era: "It was a bull market in credit, and credit is the money of the mind."

The history of credit is a gaudy one, full of outlandish characters and remarkable follies. But it is also a story told in banking examiners' reports, congressional testimony, Federal Reserve bulletins, bond prospectuses, and such works as the Department of the Treasury's *Review of Use of Cumulative Sinking Fund for Retirement of Public Debt Obligations.* Grant takes advantage of the anecdotes, and unknots a lot of otherwise deadly dull and dense history, with style.

The story of what Grant calls the socialization of credit risk is deceptively simple. First the federal government encouraged banks to drop their franchise—safety—and then regulated them into irrelevance. Grant traces the origin of the 1980s credit boom, when "the federal apparatus was not only the prime instigator of price inflation but also a leading creator of credit," to the Banking Act of 1935:

> It was in the Depression that the government first offered its guarantee wholesale in lieu of the credit of banks and individuals. The consequences of this epochal change were slow in coming, awaiting the time when the existing generation of lenders, whom the Depression had scarred for life, were ready to move on. In time, the socialization of risk—in which A paid B's debts, and perhaps Z's—would help to ignite the greatest credit expansion in American annals. More than any other single piece of legislation, the Banking Act of 1935 crystallized and codified the new era.

How the Banking Act led to the 1980s and beyond is the most important business story to be told today, and Grant does not disappoint. Nor does he gloat, although he might. As early as 1984, when *Grant's* ran "Junk Bonds Debunked," he was telling his readers about the dangers of easy money, why junk bonds were junk, and why the whole thing was likely to blow up.

Grant's views are a decided heresy among certain conservatives, particularly those who championed Michael Milken as he was on his way to the penitentiary. I refer specifically to the *Wall Street Journal*'s editorial page, where one could be astounded to read, on a regular basis, that junk bonds represented the democra-

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```
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  COUNT A <=56  B  Count Bush supporters
  SCORE B Z        Keep score
END
HISTOGRAM Z          Display 1000 sample results
PERCENTILE Z (5 95) K    Find 5th and 95th percentiles
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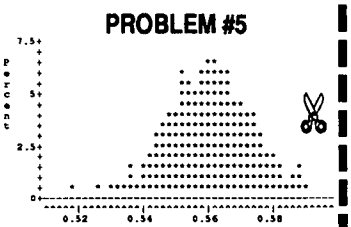
PROBLEM #5



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tization of capital, that Milken and his firm Drexel's guilt was "decided in the prosecutorial hothouse atmosphere of the late 1980s," and that "an important source of capital for small- and medium-sized businesses is now in danger." All this, by the way, at the same time one could read on page one of the *Journal* what later became James B. Stewart's exposé, *Den of Thieves*.

Alas, Grant, who himself might be called a gold-standard, balanced-budget, keep-out-of-the-affairs-of-private-individuals kind of conservative, doesn't confront the *Journal* in his book. But in May 1990, he told *The American Spectator*: "Libertarians are children in financial matters. They don't know a good bond from a bad bond, or a promoter from a reasonably self-respecting banker. When someone says, 'The government did it,' they have Michael Milken to tea. Big mistake." He summed up, "The fact is that the American credit system has evolved away from liquidity and individual responsibility toward illiquidity and collective responsibility." Grant sees in this trend "the socialization of credit risk, a state-sponsored phenomenon. Without that, without the Too Big To Fail doctrine and the evolution of deposit insurance, and the partial deregulation of the thrifts, without all of this, there would have been nothing like the junk bond industry."

Milken plays a relatively small part in *Money of the Mind*, coming, as he does, at the end of the story. The author told the *Bond Buyer* in 1991 that his book "asked the question of how it was that they sent credit cards to golden retrievers, or how it was that Trump was able to borrow as he borrowed." His book describes "the evolution of American credit." The key word is evolution. According to Grant, the 1980s boom in credit—the money of the mind—was the perfectly logical result of years of destruction of hard money by the federal government: "Central banking, federal subsidies, paper money, deposit insurance, and full disclosure have each fallen short of the claims of their respective promoters."

Grant tells the story in a way most people, whose business reading usually ends with their savings account passbooks, can understand. Even lawmakers and congressmen will be able to understand it, but that is not to say that *Money of the Mind* will affect public policy. Politicians will be politicians, after all, and the way to get votes is to encourage easy money. In fact, one cannot underestimate the impact this book will have on public policy. Grant puckishly acknowledges as much at the end of his book, and adds: "Knowing the past, one reads the morning newspapers with a sense of fatalism. One believes in the powers of markets and reason but not in the perfectability of lenders and borrowers." ❐

THE AMERICAN RELIGION: THE EMERGENCE OF THE POST-CHRISTIAN NATION

Harold Bloom

Simon & Schuster/288 pages/$22

reviewed by ELIZABETH KRISTOL

Harold Bloom begins his latest book with the statement: "This is an American literary critic's book about the inner spirit of our national faith. . . ." As if these words are not chilling enough, consider the credentials Bloom presents for the task: he is an "unbeliever" of "strong Gnostic tendencies," who has an "obsession with the American varieties of Orphism and Gnosticism, of Enthusiasm and Antinomianism." Only someone who uses words like that could even think in terms of *the* American religion, an artificial construct that is meaningful only to intellectuals who have little respect for actual religious experience. And only a deconstructionist could manage to make his own generalizations so incoherent.

Even the notion "The American Religion" keeps shifting. First we are told that all Americans are, unknowingly, followers of gnosticism, a second-century religious heresy that preached the identity of the Creation and the Fall, and the ability of the individual, who contains a spark of the divine, to labor his way back to an unfallen state. Before we can recover from this blindside, Bloom announces that the American Religion is actually a form of "information anxiety." Then we are told, in no uncertain terms, that "the flag and the fetus" are emblems of the American Religion, and that "Reagan-Bush national Republicans have become one with the American Religion." Bloom never explains whether these various definitions carry equal weight; if they do, President Bush can presumably number gnosticism among his political liabilities in November.

Whatever the American Religion is, Bloom is not happy with it. We are, he tells us again and again, a "nation obsessed with religion." We are "religiously mad" and "dangerously religion-soaked." In case we've missed the point, our religious sentiments are "fierce," "raging," "violent." In an effort to trace this national obsession, Bloom takes us on a tour of some indigenous religious groups, including the Mormons, Christian Scientists, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Southern Baptists. (He notes that Catholics, Jews, and Mainline Protestants also follow The American Religion, but he is more intrigued by the uniquely American variations.)

Bloom insists that he will "seek the religious in religion" and not judge spiritual matters by literary standards. But his prejudices make him incapable of assessing religion on its own terms. Some of his biases might have been overcome had he at least made an effort to travel around the country getting to know actual churchgoers, attending a variety of services, studying liturgies, listening to church music, or immersing himself in the dynamics of parish life. But Bloom inhabits a world of words and ideas. "Obsessed" with religion he may be, but he is clearly repulsed by the thought of con-

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fronting, up close, the ways in which Americans actually manifest their beliefs.

In the face of so much alien behavior Bloom falls back on what he knows best: literary criticism. Indeed, he boasts that he has "read and reread everything that remotely could be considered to be an American religious text." So truncated is his secular, professorial worldview that he genuinely convinces himself that a religious faith is the sum of its writings; reading Bloom on the subject of religion is like reading a restaurant critic who only evaluates menus.

In fact, *The American Religion* rapidly devolves into an almost comical ranking of different faiths based on Bloom's idiosyncratic aesthetic criteria. Mormonism takes the award in nearly every category. Bloom finds Joseph Smith, its founder, a paragon of "religion-making genius." Not only did he have the boldness of vision to create a major religion, but he authored the vastly influential *Book of Mormon*. Perhaps more important, in Bloom's view, he showed himself to be a skilled literary critic: "Smith's insight could have come only from a remarkably apt reading of the Bible, and there I would locate the secret of his religious genius. He was anything but a great writer, but he was a great reader, or creative misreader, of the Bible." In keeping with his notion of religious criticism, Bloom lavishes his favor on those who create, rather than follow, religions: ". . . as a religious critic I judge Smith to be greater and more interesting than the current faith of the people that he created."

Christian Science receives a lower score from Bloom, largely because its founder, Mary Baker Eddy, was not as clever or charismatic as Smith; "Joseph Smith had a powerful religion-making imagination, whereas Mary Baker Eddy had close to no imagination at all." And the religious text she authored, *Science and Health,* "is the antithesis of humor or good writing."

Seventh-Day Adventism fares even worse. While its founder, Ellen White, "is more readable than Mrs. Eddy," there is little to relieve her "murky drabness." Bloom complains, "This founder of a persistent American sect badly needed education in religious writing." Even though she was given to trances and ecstatic states, "her diction remained faithful to a Maine lawyer's office." Bloom concludes: "She lacked the religion-making imagination of Joseph Smith; audacity and humor were no part of her."

Jehovah's Witnesses come in for still harsher criticism. "To consider Jehovah's Witnesses in the here-and-now necessarily has to be a somewhat painful intellectual experience. Anti-intellectualism among millenarians and Bible literalists is a recurrent phenomenon, but no other religious movement in America ever has been as programatically set against its intellect as are Jehovah's Witnesses." Bloom is also appalled that the Jehovah's Witnesses chose as their "preferred text" the Book of Revelation. "The influence of Revelation," declares Bloom, "always has been out of all proportion to its literary strength or spiritual value." It is a "lurid and inhumane work," and was "very poorly composed in the original." Bloom concludes that the Jehovah's Witnesses movement is "intellectually weak" and "spiritually empty."

But the bulk of Bloom's wrath is reserved for what he calls the fundamentalist wing of the Southern Baptist Convention. He regards the growing power of fundamentalists—i.e., those who take the Bible literally—as a menace to all forms of social, political, and intellectual life. Fundamentalism is "the great curse of all American religion, and of all religion in this American century," announces Bloom. The "viciousness" of American fundamentalism, "makes it shockingly similar to Iranian Shiite Fundamentalism or the worst excesses of the Neturei Karta in Israel." In another burst of multiculturalism, he adds that it reminds him of the "Spanish Fascism of Franco."

Bloom could show some small (if distorted) respect for religions that have founders, authors, and texts. But fundamentalists are a different kettle of fish; they have just one text, the Bible, and—as Bloom sees it—no one even bothers to interpret it. This "anti-intellectualism" drives Bloom ballistic. He blasts fundamentalists—or "Know-Nothings," as he repeatedly calls them—for their "almost lunatic resentment of mind," their "drive against thought itself," their "contempt for all ideas." (The list goes on.) What particularly disgusts Bloom—Bloom the literary critic, Bloom the creative "misreader"—is the docility with which fundamentalists approach the written word. They simply take the Bible at face value! As a shocked Bloom puts it, fundamentalists "insist that the Bible reads itself (as it were), requires no interpretation, declares its literal and unerring truth in every verse." They do not realize that "reading is a skill," and that "the Bible is the most difficult of all difficult books."

Bloom explains that the dominance of low-brow culture in America today has made the Bible "almost impossible to read for all except an elite." Fundamentalists *claim* to read the Bible, says Bloom, but its "language is too remote and difficult for them to begin to understand. What is left is the Bible as physical object, limp and leather, a final icon or magical talisman." They fail to appreciate that "theology depends upon analogies, arguments, metaphors, all of which enforce the difference between words and the realities they represent. Fundamentalist Baptists never even seem to realize that the Bible is in the first place language." Bloom offers what he believes is a telling example: "If you listen to an audio tape by the venerable Criswell in which he purports to interpret a biblical text, you hear, not an exegete, but someone who has not yet realized that the Bible is written in words."

Not an exegete! Ouch! But for Bloom this statement is truly damning. In both his 1990 best-seller *The Book of J* and *The American Religion,* it emerges that Bloom sees the role of the religious critic as one who leads the reader away from God, toward literature. For example, in speculating about J, the author of key portions of the Pentateuch, Bloom posited that such an intelligent and gifted writer must have been an "immensely sophisticated" and "ironic" unbeliever—just like Bloom. Someone as clever as J could not possible have believed in a God, but could only have created one.

As for his purpose in depicting J in this manner, Bloom commented: "I do not think that appreciating J will help us love God or arrive at the spiritual or historical truth of whatever Bible. I want the varnish off because it conceals a writer of the eminence of Shakespeare or Dante, and such a writer is worth more than many creeds, many churches, many scholarly certainties." This reverse-missionary zeal continues in *The American*

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Religion, as Bloom repeatedly chastises preachers for focusing on the message of the Bible rather than its metaphors. Indeed, he believes that "one of the uses of religious criticism is that it is the appropriate instrument for dissecting, understanding, and perhaps someday destroying Fundamentalism."

Convincing readers by intellectual argument is one thing; the prejudice Bloom so freely displays is quite another. Religious leaders have been arguing for years that intolerance toward religious believers is the last acceptable form of bigotry in this country. Hollywood routinely churns out make-fun-of-nuns movies, and intellectuals have even fewer inhibitions against mocking people who take faith seriously. Thus Bloom can make sweeping references to "Know-Nothings," to the "functional illiteracy" of fundamentalist ministers, and to the "obscure, perhaps permanent, fear and dislike of language in so many working-class Southern Baptists." His revulsion toward those who choose to believe in the Bible (not to mention toward Southerners and, one suspects, members of any socioeconomic class other than his own) is so socially acceptable as to go unremarked in the press.

It is a curious fact that Bloom finds himself imperiled by Bible-toting fanatics, especially since religious believers are convinced that *they* are the ones who are imperiled—by a dominant secular culture represented by the likes of Harold Bloom. One suspects that there is more than religion at stake for Bloom. And sure enough, *The American Religion* closes with an apocalyptic political vision as impassioned as any put forth by the Jehovah's Witnesses.

In Bloom's nightmare, the Religious Right takes over America. Bloom observes that Mormons have already infiltrated "the FBI, CIA, and allied organizations." He reminds us that Billy Graham has been cozy with a number of Presidents and suggests that it was no accident that Assembly of God member James Watt served in a high-level position in the Reagan Administration. Bloom is especially alarmed by what he perceives as a "curious, at least tacit alliance" between the Mormons and the Southern Baptist Fundamentalists. "Neither of these would acknowledge the alliance," he adds conspiratorially, "but it is at the center of the loose but dangerously strong coalition of American Religionists that now guarantee the continued ascendancy of the Reagan-Bush dynasty." Factor in President Bush's obsession with "the flag and the fetus" and the Department of Justice's support of "the Operation Rescue mob," and the conspiracy theory is complete:

> We are on the verge of being governed by a nationally established religion, an ultimate parody of the American Religion sketched in this book. The Established Church of the South and Southwest, the Southern Baptist Convention, and the burgeoning, soon-to-be Established Church of the West, the Mormons, are only two components of a multiform alliance that will transform our nation by the year 2000, under the leadership of a Republican Party that since 1979 has become the barely secular version of the American Religion.

Christianity, Judaism, the Bible—these, Bloom demolishes with ease. A few Republican Presidents, however, and the critic from Yale discovers he hasn't got a prayer. ❐

DE GAULLE: THE RULER, 1945-1970

Jean Lacouture

W.W. Norton/640 pages/$29.95

reviewed by MARK FALCOFF

French journalist-historian Jean Lacouture needed 500-odd pages to tell the story of Charles De Gaulle's life up to 1944 in *De Gaulle: The Rebel.* In *De Gaulle: The Ruler,* he needs nearly 700 more to complete the tale, which includes two presidencies and two periods of enforced political retirement. At that, the two volumes in English are merely a condensation of a much longer biography in French.

The Ruler is superior to its predecessor. The publisher has switched translators; the English now has a more graceful, mid-Atlantic feel to it, and footnotes clear up some of the obscurer French references. We get a better look at De Gaulle the man—largely because most of the people close to him in the later period were still alive to be interviewed by Lacouture. And in this volume the author has managed to establish some distance from his subject: the prose is less adoring, less supine; the tone less hushed. Not everyone who ever disagreed with De Gaulle is depicted as perverse or misguided; indeed, some of the Americans in this book come off better than they deserve. While Lacouture is obviously impressed with the coherence of De Gaulle's strategic vision, he keeps reminding his French readers that much of it was fantasy—the real world wasn't like that at all.

In 1944 De Gaulle returned to Paris as head of a makeshift Liberation movement that briefly but successfully combined his own Free French with the (largely Communist-controlled) Résistance. Over the next year and a half, he managed to break with his Communist allies, disarm their partisans, avert civil war, obtain for France a place on the Security Council of the new United Nations, and revive the nation's identity as an independent actor. The neatest trick of all was to get the Allies to seat France at the table of victors, rather than treat it as it arguably deserved—like collaborationist Austria or Hungary.

Once French politics-as-usual resumed, however, De Gaulle found himself out in the cold; when he resigned out of frustration in 1946, he expected to be called back

Mark Falcoff is resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. He reviewed the first volume of Lacouture's biography in the July 1991 TAS .

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almost immediately, this time on his own terms. It was a devastating misjudgment: instead, he had to wait out the Fourth Republic for a dozen more years. It was Algeria that brought him back—or rather, the inability of the French political class to either remain *or* leave. By promising the first (and subsequently accomplishing the second) De Gaulle was able to finesse his way back into office.

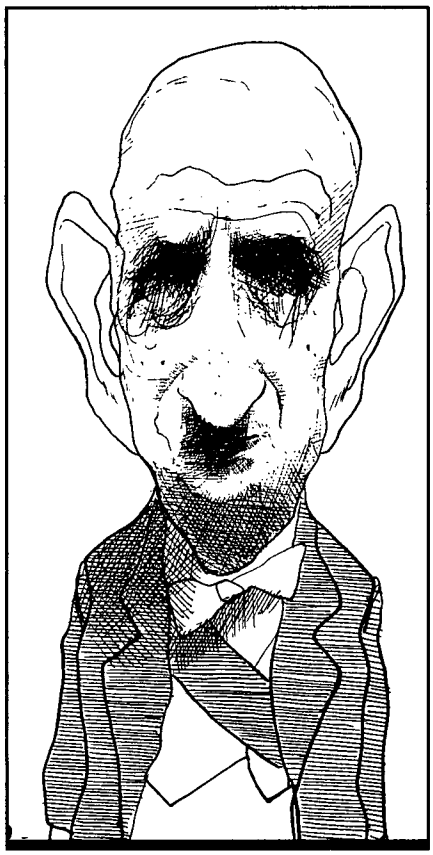
Getting out of Algeria took four years and several abrupt policy shifts. The cost to France was high; the cost to Algeria (or rather, to the Algerians) is still being paid. In Lacouture's telling, De Gaulle's peculiar genius consisted in his ability to perceive that a withdrawal, properly orchestrated, would *enhance* French prestige, influence, and independence (although if such a proposition had been advanced by anyone but himself, De Gaulle probably would have rejected it).

Once out of Algeria, the French president set about reordering France's position in the world: distancing himself from the United States, withdrawing from the military component of NATO, blocking British entry into the Common Market, even attempting to divide Washington and Bonn. De Gaulle also assumed the mantle of the Great Friend of the Arabs, Africans, and Latin Americans—seeking to befriend countries particularly hostile to the United States.

De Gaulle accomplished two remarkable feats at home. He reordered French political institutions, with a new constitution that replaced a shaky parliamentary regime with a stable (if thoroughly monarchical) presidency. He also presided over the recovery of the French economy, and the political defenestration of the French Communist party—two events by no means unrelated. By the time he retired in 1969 France had experienced a many-fold increase in living standards and general economic confidence.

In the end he was a victim of his own success: a new generation that had no memory of World War II or even the hardships and shortages of the immediate postwar period could now indulge in the luxury of an American-type "youth revolution"; hence, the *événements* of 1968. While the government succeeded in suppressing what eventually became a student-worker upheaval, it never fully recovered its equipoise. When De Gaulle failed to win a referendum the following year, he saw no alternative but to retire. He died peacefully at his country home at Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises on November 9, 1970.

Inevitably, the Algerian question looms very large in this book; in fact, it occupies more than a quarter of it. Though American readers may find parts difficult to follow, they will be riveted to the pages that describe the failed assassination attempt staged by the OAS, a terrorist organization of French Algerians and dissident army officers. (Among other things, it reveals the remarkable physical courage not only of De Gaulle but also of his wife, who was in the car with him.) The chapters on foreign policy will



nonetheless prove most interesting, since they address the large issues that were such an irritant to successive American administrations—De Gaulle's relations with the Soviet Union, the British, the Americans, the Israelis, the Third World. At various points there is also a rather interesting discussion of De Gaulle's larger strategic and philosophical worldviews.

Lacouture takes pains to demonstrate that De Gaulle was far less anti-American (or anti-British, or pro-Soviet, or anti-Israel, or even pro–Third World) than is generally imagined. Why he should even want to make the effort is something of a mystery to me. On the British, he is completely unconvincing. He does make something of a case that De Gaulle's famous attack on the Jews after Israel's victory in the 1967 war ("an elite people, dominating and sure of itself . . .") was not intended to be an anti-Semitic slur. (It did, however, provoke much joy in the Arab and Muslim world, and eventually had very concrete commercial, military, and diplomatic payoffs for France.)

The attempt to mitigate De Gaulle's reputation for hating the United States is not wholly unsuccessful. On Vietnam, for example, Lacouture plausibly maintains that "a real Americanophobe would probably have been delighted to see the United States sink into such a morass" rather than offering counsel which, if followed, would have prevented a major disaster. And, he reminds us, in the Cuban missile crisis France's support for the United States was so unconditional that when Kennedy's special envoy Dean Acheson offered to produce the aerial photographs that justified the U.S. blockade of the island, De Gaulle waved him aside; such things were not even necessary.

In one regard De Gaulle was far less anti-American than most Frenchmen of his generation: he took the United States *seriously*, both as a rival and an ally. He apparently liked President Kennedy personally, and had an even higher regard for President Nixon. (De Gaulle insisted on receiving Nixon in 1962 when he was at the nadir of his political career, written off by most American pundits and not a few politicians.) He viewed Lyndon Johnson with utter contempt, if for all the wrong reasons.

De Gaulle was simply blind to ideology. For him the only building blocks of international politics were "historic" nations like France, Russia, and China whose interest was dictated by considerations of geography, resources, and cultural spheres of influence, regardless of the political regimes momentarily in power. He never did grasp the real danger of Soviet imperialism, any more than did other European leaders, or see the way in which it differed from more traditional forms of great-power politics. (For him, the French Communist party was just another troublesome group

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of politicians, to be dealt with a little more roughly than the others.)

De Gaulle's own experience with the Soviets did nothing to revise his views. Certainly in private Khrushchev did not seem like much of an ideologue: During his visit to De Gaulle in 1964, the French exploded their second atomic bomb. "I understand your joy," the Soviet dictator remarked. "We felt it, too, not so long ago. . . . But you know, it's very *expensive!*" On the same visit the two men were out on a lake at the beautiful Rambouillet chateau, which serves as the country retreat for the president of France. Alone with the oarsman (and presumably the interpreter?), Khrushchev grasped De Gaulle's hands and blurted out, "We're both Whites, you and me."

De Gaulle's antique view of world politics could on occasion serve Western interests. For example, when Gary Powers's U-2 was shot down on the eve of a 1960 summit meeting in Paris, he cooled down the angry Khrushchev with these remarks:

> Espionage is undoubtedly a deplorable practice. But how can it be avoided when two rival powers, heavily overarmed, give each other the impression that they may reach for their guns at any moment? At this very moment, a Soviet satellite is passing over France eighteen times every twenty-four hours.

This much said, the picture of De Gaulle offered in these pages is of a man who recklessly underestimated the reach of Soviet power, and diligently tried to undermine the Western ramparts against it—all in the service of a largely fantastic notion of France's independent capabilities. No doubt he did so disinterestedly and sincerely—by his own lights. We can be grateful, nonetheless, that he was not wholly successful.

Lacouture feels obligated as a biographer to get us to see the great man's point of view. Here, for example, is his justification of De Gaulle's tinkering with NATO:

> What is one to think of a country that, in order to *survive*, hands itself over to another. What is the point of protecting oneself against invasion, enslavement, annihilation, if when all is said and done, our freedom, our fate, depends on a Senate majority in Washington, on elections in Iowa and North Dakota?

That sounds reasonable enough on the face of it, particularly when one contemplates the kinds of people who make up the Senate majority these days, or tend to win primaries in Iowa or North Dakota. Until, that is, one reflects upon the fact that France was *rescued* from Nazi occupation in World War II at the cost of thousands of American dead, many of them from places French people have never heard of.

If our view of De Gaulle the statesman does not improve on closer examination, our notions of De Gaulle the man decidedly do. One envies those who—like President Nixon, say, or Raymond Aron—were honored with his friendship. He was a man of vast learning, wit, charm, loyalty, and, above all, courage. He probably did not waste a single day of his life; even when forced into retirement, he dedicated five hours a day to composing his memoirs—volumes that set an extraordinary standard for French expository prose. His demands on others were great, but never so great as those he imposed upon himself. And if he confused himself with his country, at least he did more to justify that confusion than any French leader before or since. ❐

THE NEW POLITICS OF POVERTY: THE NONWORKING POOR IN AMERICA

Lawrence M. Mead

Basic Books/356 pages/$25

reviewed by WILLIAM TUCKER

Lawrence Mead is a ruthlessly intelligent social analyst who has become the principal spokesman for "workfare"—the strategy of solving the underclass problem by forcing welfare recipients to work. His *Beyond Entitlement* (1986) inspired the Family Support Act of 1988, which imposed major work requirements on welfare recipients. *The New Politics of Poverty* makes an even more elaborate case.

Mead points out that, unlike the poor of previous eras, today's poor simply are not working. The figures he cites are indeed startling. In 1989, among Americans of all income levels, 69 percent of the population over 15 years of age worked at some time during the year. Over 76 percent of heads of households held jobs, including 65 percent of female heads of households. Yet among people below the poverty line, 59 percent of people over age 15 *did not work at all.* Only 16 percent of heads of households worked full time (as opposed to 58 percent in all income groups), and only 9 percent of female heads of households (40 percent among all income groups). By 1989, 51 percent of heads of poor households did not work, up from 31 percent in 1959.

Says Mead: "Once, the most divisive demands on government were inspired by the working class; they now arise from the nonworking underclass. The New Deal and union rights used to be fighting words; but today, controversies over the homeless, welfare, and 'law and order' are more bitter."

Mead's arguments are compelling, often deft, but in the end unconvincing. It's not that work is not a good thing, but that the poor are just being led down the same old road to serfdom: each successive solution seems only to lead to more government control over people's lives. Having persuaded millions of low-income, mostly black young women to abandon the search for husbands and marry the government, the government would now turn welfare into a kind of

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vocational education program to turn dismembered "families" into self-sufficient economic entities.

Because the poor—especially the black poor—have moved so far outside the American mainstream, it has become far more difficult to assemble a sympathetic national consensus on what to do with them. So far, the job has been undertaken almost entirely by liberal Democrats. Liberals make a slew of excuses for blacks, arguing that "good jobs" aren't available, that blacks face special social and historic barriers, that single mothers find it too difficult to work, that day care is inadequate, and that the poor are crippled by a psychology of dependency. Conservatives respond that there are plenty of jobs around, that America is the land of opportunity, that immigrants are constantly moving past blacks by taking advantage of those opportunities, and that the welfare system itself is the cause of that crippling dependency.

One of the most aggravating rhetorical devices in public policy books is when an author defines the opposing positions as "the two extremes," and places himself judiciously in the "sensible middle ground." Mead does much better, making the disarming argument that *both* sides are right:

> Conservatives are largely correct that opportunity is available to the poor. It is rarely true in any gross sense that social and economic barriers deny opportunity to nonworkers. But liberals have the more credible view of the psychology of poverty. To view the seriously poor as self-confident maximizers, as conservative analysts tend to do, is implausible.
>
> . . . In my opinion, the liberal viewpoint overstates the obstacles facing the poor, but captures quite well how the poor themselves feel. It is often said that the right explains poverty by blaming the victim, the left by blaming society. Actually, each side seems to understand the other's subject better: Conservatives grasp that society is open, while liberals grasp the convictions poor people have that society is closed.

Where does this leave us? Mead summarizes:

> The great question in social policy is whether to enforce the competence assumption against all odds or accommodate the special inhibitions of the poor. Through nonwork, poor adults ask, in essence, for better or easier employment than the economy offers them. Most analysts support them, arguing, one way or another, for public provision of better or easier jobs for the nonworkers, or support unrelated to working. Most voters and politicians resist, in part on account of the financial cost, but also because they reject tampering with the traditional terms of belonging in the society. They want the poor to prove themselves in menial jobs before expecting better. While other factors play a role, *that impasse is the essential cause of the work problem.* . . . It is a dispute over social standards, much more than opportunity. . . . The question is what degree of competence—meaning work effort—is to be expected of citizens.

Defining the problem so clearly, however, doesn't mean Mead can sit on the fence all day. Sooner or later he has to come down, and when he does, it is on the side of breaking the stalemate through enforced work requirements. Workfare has been successful where it has been tried, he argues. He cites the armed forces as a branch of American society that blacks have successfully joined under terms of strict demands and discipline. He even argues—not unpersuasively—that poor people feel "abandoned" when the system does not make strict demands on them.

Mead's program may be convincing on its own terms (although the difference between voluntary enlistment in the armed forces and coerced work in the welfare system certainly needs a little elaboration), but when we contemplate where it leads, the reality sets in. Let's start by defining exactly what we mean by "welfare." Although few grasp this, people cannot collect welfare simply because they are poor. AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children), which constitutes 95 percent of what we call "welfare payments," is awarded to poor people because they are in single-parent households. When first included in the 1935 Social Security Act, AFDC was conceived as a small pension for "widows and orphans." By the 1950s, it had been extended to the children of divorce. Today it goes overwhelmingly to women who have never married but who bear illegitimate children and then turn to the government for support.

Thus, the only "nonworkers" who are going to be affected by workfare are mothers of young children. Nonworking men—as always—will be left out of the equation.

Workfare isn't going to do anything to undo the damage AFDC has already done in disrupting family formation. It is only going to institutionalize the single-parent household, attempting to turn unwed mothers and their children into viable economic units. It doesn't take much imagination to realize that, while "workfare" may pass muster in Washington, it is going to be perceived by state welfare administrators as exactly what it is—a draconic attempt to herd mothers of small children into the workplace. Since most welfare administrators are not very draconic, the actual implementation will produce an endless series of exemptions and excuses until all but the most willing recruits have been eliminated—as has already happened. A report issued to the Senate in March indicated that, after four years and $1 billion, the 1988 workfare law is having virtually no impact on long-term dependency. (Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the bill's main advocate, said, however, that we "wouldn't really know if it will work until the year 2000." We are always just a few years and a few billion dollars short of solving the problem.)

Much more promising are those welfare reform programs that seek to reinforce the family. New Jersey has adopted a law that disallows additional benefits to a mother who has more children while already on welfare, and continues benefits for a woman if she marries. Says Assemblyman Wayne Bryant, the bill's principal sponsor, who represents impoverished Camden: "Nothing is going to change until we change morality."

Wisconsin has just won federal approval for an almost identical innovation sponsored by Governor Tommy Thompson. (The program includes some workfare requirements.) Says Thompson: "Some people are calling this a shotgun wedding with the state holding the shotgun. I prefer to call it, 'Making Room for Daddy.'"

In other words, there is a clear alternative to the white-knuckled policy of driving unattached young mothers into the workforce. This is a policy built

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around reducing the government-provided disincentives for marriage and building families. Mead doesn't pay much attention to such issues:

> The argument that [family] breakup necessarily causes poverty or dependency is unpersuasive. When mothers leave AFDC, the reason is remarriage [sic] in 35 percent of cases, earnings increases in 21 percent. But earnings may play a contributing role when mothers leave the rolls for other reasons, so the share of exits attributable to earnings may run as high as 42 percent.

On the other hand: "When a woman goes on AFDC, three-quarters of the time the reason is that she separated from her spouse or bore a child out of wedlock [note the failure to differentiate]; in only 12 percent of cases is it loss of earnings."

If anything, the figures argue against Mead's point. Still, he dismisses the whole matter as intractable.

> There may be little society can do to reverse the tide of instability in American families, especially among the poor. . . . The moral, in Mary Jo Bane's words: "The problem of poverty should be addressed by devoting attention to employment . . . rather than hand-wringing about the decline of the family."

With public opinion rapidly mobilizing around welfare reform, it is imperative that we start moving in the right direction. The choice is between a policy that tries to institutionalize single parenthood and one that tries to reinforce the nuclear family. With all the facts in his grasp, Mead has clearly made the wrong choice. ❐

THE ART OF PERSUASION: A *NATIONAL REVIEW* RHETORIC FOR WRITERS

Linda Bridges and William F. Rickenbacker

National Review Books/134 pages/$19.95

reviewed by JOHN R. DUNLAP

Near the end of his famous essay on "Politics and the English Language" (1946), George Orwell gives a list of six rules that a writer "can rely on when instinct fails." Four of the rules tell what the writer should avoid using: clichés, long words, the passive voice, and foreign or obscure terms. One rule, faintly echoing the advice of Samuel Johnson, states: "If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out." (Dr. Johnson was blunter: "Read over your composition and when you find a passage you think particularly fine, strike it out.") Then there's Orwell's sixth rule, in reference to the previous five: "Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous."

In *The Art of Persuasion*, Linda Bridges and William F. Rickenbacker—without once mentioning Orwell's essay—propose to do something weird, something that Bridges and Rickenbacker (who purport to despise the rule against fancy words) would probably not object to being called "The Elucidation of the Sixth Rule of Orwell":

> If two generations of Americans have learned to write dull and undistinguished prose by applying a few rules from a book (Use short words! Make short sentences! Avoid foreign phrases! Use concrete terms!), another generation can unlearn those rules and apply better ones.

Well, yes—but wait. Most of those rules—*all* of Orwell's rules—are not really presented in the way suggested by the parenthetical exclamations shoved into that hefty hypothesis just quoted. How, for example, do we "unlearn" (or for that matter, "break") a rule stated with Orwell's precise hedging: "Never use a long word where a short one will do"? The rule already implies that if you have a reason to use a long word, a short one *won't* do.

Or how about Orwell's "Never use the passive where you can use the active"? Surely Bridges and Rickenbacker have not themselves "unlearned" such a rule, since they champion the passive voice when they should. If I say, in the passive, "San Jose was founded in 1777," I project greater authority than if I say, in the active, "Somebody founded San Jose in 1777." I *could* use the active voice there, but Orwell's rule already implies that I'd better not if I don't want to sound like an idiot.

It seems that Bridges and Rickenbacker have perpetrated auxesis, if not hyperbole, in their prosopopoeia. And if you don't know what the hell I just said, buy this book and check Chapter Five, on "The Tools of the Trade": an alphabetized compendium of the technical names for those tools—the terms you had to learn by heart in your Greek classes, remember? Translation of the first sentence of this paragraph: Bridges and Rickenbacker have exaggerated the importance of their thesis by shooting down a straw man.

They have also confused their thesis, because the real point of this book is not that Strunk and White should be ignored (Bridges and Rickenbacker poke fun at the venerable *Elements of Style*, but the only rule they ignore is number nine in E.B. White's concluding chapter: "Do not affect a breezy manner"); nope, the real point is that the hedging implied in the rules needs more attention.

And the illustrations—of all that hedging among great writers and consummate stylists—are persuasive. Sometimes it works well to mix your levels of diction (I've been doing lots of that in this review); bone up on the prose of Albert Jay Nock or of Myles na Gopaleen, if you're not sure. Sometimes your syntax is better cast in the passive voice—the way I just did, you see, to secure a firmer rhythm in the placement of words. Sometimes you need to write luxuriously lengthy sentences in pure spite of "the stripped-down manner of the twentieth century"—although Bridges and Rickenbacker could find few illustrations more

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recent than the prose of Woodrow Wilson and of Paul Elmer More.

But—really—most of the time, you need to skip the hedging and follow the rules: not because they are handed down from on high, but because—conservatively speaking, and like all the other efforts at writing about writing, including efforts made by political liberals, *The Art of Persuasion* is a fundamentally conservative enterprise—the "rules" are merely crystallizations of the experience of the species: inductive generalizations, if you will, about what good writers do when they write.

They do what Bridges and Rickenbacker do, or mention doing, in this stylish book on style. They read abundantly in great literature; they observe and pile up examples; they fret over single words; they discriminate between a good dictionary (useful) and a thesaurus (not so useful); they don't say too much; they let the reader fill in gaps; they know—in their bones, so to speak—that all language is metaphor.

And notice how easy it is to fossilize each of those descriptive statements into an imperative rule: just drop the *they* in each. And don't forget Bridges and Rickenbacker's rule against awkward alliterations like "the *they*." ❐

CORRESPONDENCE

(continued from page 11)

programs they administer have had on our economy and freedoms, it is not at all hyperbolic to say that we should all be better off to award half of them full pay for staying home. But for Mr. Ledeen to suggest that we actually *do* so—rather than give them a realistic severance package and unemployment benefits like everyone else—smacks of an inside-the-Beltway Weltanschauung that seems to afflict conservatives as well as liberals. . . .

—Stephen F. Green
Eastford, Connecticut

I thoroughly enjoyed Michael Ledeen's article and agree with his recommendations. He doesn't go far enough, however.

It is true that you can cramp a legislator's style by slashing his staff budget and thereby save the nation billions of dollars and unimaginable heartache. But this is purely *negative* reinforcement. We should *actively reward* our senators and congressmen when they are on their good behavior.

If we paid them only for constructive (or, at least, innocuous) activities, they would, in time, learn to behave in a socially responsible manner. Days spent crafting new legislation would go unrewarded, while photo ops with constituents and extended trade junkets to Malawi or Uzbekistan would earn them full pay. We might consider paying bonuses to those who successfully dismantle old legislation. . . .

—Don Staricka
La Crescenta, California

Michael Ledeen replies:
I am grateful to Stephen Green for his thoughtful and witty remarks. It is hard for me to compute the percentage of hyperbole and that of "reality" in my proposal that we pay half the bureaucrats *not* to work, but he has grasped the serious intent, and I am happy to see that he agrees with it. On that basis, I'm prepared to quibble and niggle: okay, only 85 percent of salary, plus fringes, plus pension at retirement age. We can give them all early retirement and save on fringe benefits for a few years, if you like.

The point is that the bureaucracy must be slashed, the power of government must be drastically reduced, and it is worth a lot to us to achieve this. When I lived in Italy somebody calculated that there would be a net gain of $2-3 billion (dollars, not lire) if all the civil servants were paid but prevented from working. That's the origin of my proposal, and I rather suspect that if someone clever with numbers ran the calculations, we'd discover that the USA would be a net winner if we adopted the program.

Many thanks as well to Don Staricka, who has my vote for anything he wants to run for. He reminds us that we revolutionaries mustn't lose our sense of humor, for it's one of our most effective weapons. Show me an object of ridicule and I'll show you a loser.

What's Up?
Geoffrey Wolff may well indulge in instances of "smirky synonym-chasing" in *A Day at the Beach: Recollections*, but the example Christopher Caldwell cites in his June *TAS* review, "saying 'tits-up' for 'belly-up,'" is not one.

Going tits-up is in fact well-established, perfectly good, 100-percent clean-cut, all-white-scarf-and-a-yard-wide American military aviatorese for an aircraft's rolling onto its back (often inadvertently). Our more fastidious airpersons use the NATO phonetic alphabet to euphemize this unsettling occurrence as *going Tango-Uniform*. There may be an unintentional *double-entendre* (Delta-Echo) in there somewhere.

—Warren Wetmore
Hazel Crest, Illinois

1588 and All That
I would like to make a somewhat trivial (but interesting) comment on the review of William McGurn's *Perfidious Albion* by Stuart Reid in the June issue.

Mr. Reid attributes the robust defense of those rocks in the South Atlantic Ocean by Her Majesty's Forces to the fact that "the Falklanders were kith and kin." Well, maybe—but I prefer to believe that Mrs. Thatcher and her mighty men were more concerned with the fact that the Argentines were Latin and perceived to be Catholic. This thesis also fits the fact of the continued usurpation of Spanish Gibraltar in comparison to the equally weak-kneed response to Nasser at the Suez Canal. After all, the British myth of superiority to the "lesser breeds" must be upheld at all costs.

It makes one wonder: Will the British never cease to hear the wind whistle in the sails of the Armada as it sweeps up the Channel?

—Thomas J. Calpin
Morrisville, Pennsylvania

Nobody Knows My Name
I was proud to be quoted in Michael Fumento's recent article on fetal tissue transplantation ("Fetal Attraction," *TAS*, July 1992). I must, however, take exception to two errors. First, my name is Robert, not Richard. Second, I am an associate professor of neurosurgery, not neurology. I can tolerate Richard: it is a fine name. But calling a neurosurgeon a neurologist is like calling a fighter pilot a flight attendant. I demand satisfaction.

—Robert E. Harbaugh, M.D.
Associate Professor of Neurosurgery
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center
Lebanon, New Hampshire

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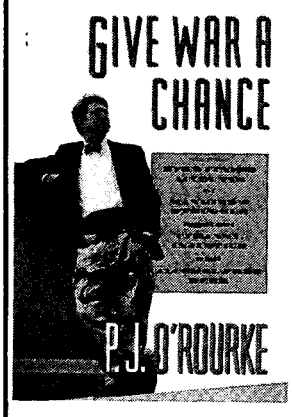

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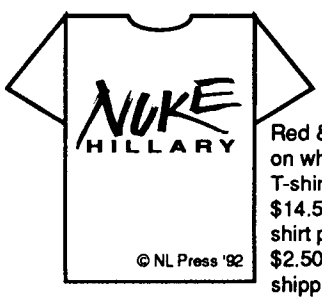

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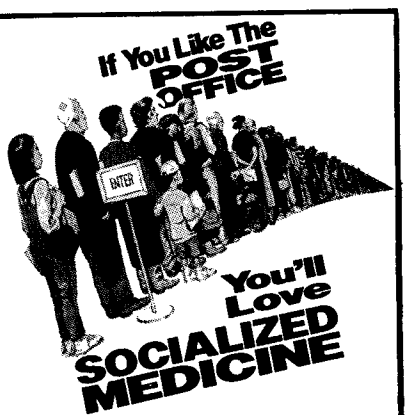

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New York Times

Miss Kathleen Quinn resorts to a crafty heuristic device to demonstrate another of those immensities that elevate a dullard like this above the commonplace and into the realm of the living saints:

Here's a question for Ross Perot's supporters: If he were black, would you vote for him?

If your answer is, "Why, you bet your cowboy boots I would!" then answer this: Where were you when Jesse Jackson ran for President?

[June 11, 1992]

The Great Books Series

Ontological ripplings from the inimitable Mike T.:

Though many of the events in the Gay Games are "conventional" sports (track and field, swimming, etc.), and a number of "serious athletes" compete in the events, overall the Games reflect a value system and a vision based on feminist and gay liberation ideals of equality and universal participation. As Mike T. said,

You don't win by beating someone else. We defined winning as doing your very best. That way, everyone is a winner. And we have age-group competition, so all ages are involved. We have parity: If there's a men's sport, there's a women's sport to complement it. And we go out and recruit in Third World and minority areas. All of these people are gonna get together for a week, they're gonna march in together, they're gonna hold hands, and they'll all say "Jesus Christ! This is wonderful!" There's this discovery: "I had no idea women were such fun!" and, "God! Blacks are okay—I didn't do anything to offend him, and we became friends*!" and, "God, that guy over there is in his sixties, and I had no* idea *they were so sexually* active*!"*—[*laughs*].

[from Power at Play: Sports and the Problem of Masculinity, *by Michael A. Messner, Beacon Press, 240 pages, $23]*

New York Newsday

An American progressive takes another leap into the fantastical:

Murder, rape, burglary, pollution. Men are responsible for most of it, and they ought to start paying for it, says author June Stephenson.

Starting with the fact that most of America's prisoners are men, not women, Stephenson proposes that men pay $100 more in taxes to defray the cost to society of prosecuting and incarcerating their brethren.

"Men must pay for being men," the Stanford University–trained psychologist says.

[May 31, 1992]

The Nation

From a Clancy Sigal, more of the therapeutic maunderings that appear with rising frequency in this ancient haunted house:

I too am a Marxist. Fat lot of good it does me. I cannot walk away from my past, the friends and comrades I have made, the mistakes I've committed, the hopes we shared. It is part of me the way that Freud is part of me—the way that (I fear) John Wayne's effeminate cowboy stride and Myrna Loy's laugh are part of me. . . .

Of course we mourn for the collective soul of socialism. But revolutionary grief, which is real, absurd and lastingly painful, locks us in a nostalgic dementia that can paralyze our language, tactics and abilities.

The hardest thing to do is think for ourselves. But we have models (not "role models," whatever that abomination is). Men and women who spoke, lived and wrote before the Deluge of Crap. (Incidentally, if you want to hear the latest version of Orwellian fist-speak, not from the left this time, try Bill Clinton's invocation of "the Amurrican people" or Jerry Brown's litany of "take back this country"—from whom, to what? Not for nothing did Clinton study how to twist and slaughter the Mother Tongue at Oxford.)

[May 18, 1992]

Popline

(World Population News Service)

A dream come true! Eighty-nine years after man's first flight, four decades after the discovery of the structure of DNA, finally: the latex panty with built-in condom:

New developments in condoms include two kinds of loose sheaths or durable poly-urethane plastic that are now being tested. They should be stronger, longer lasting, and less sensitive to heat, humidity and oil-based lubricants; they may even be able to be reused. Two types of female condoms, vaginal sheaths, may soon be on the market. And use-effectiveness trials are beginning on a women's latex panty with built-in condom.

[November-December 1991]

New York Post

More sentimental swill from the incogitant mind of Pete Hamill—"our music," indeed:

Years before there was a radio station called WNEW-AM, there was the music. Our music. That is to say, American music.

That music came out of the ghettos of the Lower East Side and Williamsburg and Harlem. It was made by piano players in whorehouses. It was played by gangsters.

[May 21, 1992]

The Star

(Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

A morning show television listing in exotic Kuala Lumpur proves that those panicky *artistes* living in dread of George Herbert Walker Bush's National Endowment for the Arts have little to fear from "the censors":

9:00 Dunhill Double—*Flowers in the Attic.* This 1987 effort is adapted from the V.C. Andrews novel which revolves around incest and sado-masochism. Louise Fletcher, Victoria Tennant and Kristy Swanson star. Incidentally, this movie is a last-minute replacement for *Superman II*, which was banned by the censors.

[March 13, 1992]

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The Great Books Series

Ars poetica from Sen. Al Gore, in an apparent plea for a more widespread acceptance of public drunkenness:

Insisting on the supremacy of the neocortex exacts a high price, because the unnatural task of a disembodied mind is to somehow ignore the intense psychic pain that comes from the constant nagging awareness of what is missing: the experience of living in one's body as a fully integrated physical and mental being. Life confronts everyone with personal or circumstantial problems, of course, and there are many varieties of psychic pain from which we wish to escape. But the cleavage between mind and body, intellect and nature, has created a kind of psychic pain at the very root of the modern mind, making it harder for anyone who is suffering from other psychological wounds to be healed.

[from Earth in the Balance, *by Sen. Al Gore. Houghton Mifflin, 406 pages, $22.95]*

Philadelphia Inquirer

Another pair of happy and graceful Yank feminists, Diane Heiman, a "public policy consultant," and Phyllis Bookspan, a pettifogger at the Widener University Law Center, apply their analytical organs to one of the last bastions of male privilege:

A recent report released by the American Association of University Women, "How Schools Shortchange Women," finds that teachers, text books and tests give preferential treatment to elementary school boys. . . .

Unfortunately, this insidious gender bias appears long before our children enter school and pervades even the television show "Sesame Street." Yes, "Sesame Street" is sexist! But, just as in the story of the emperor and his new clothes, many of us do not notice the obvious.

The puppet stars of the show, Bert and Ernie, and *all* the other major "Sesame Street" animal characters, Big Bird, Cookie Monster, Grover, Oscar the Grouch, Kermit the Frog, and Mr. Snuffleupagus are male. Among the secondary characters including Elmo, Herry Monster, Count VonCount, Telemonster, Prairie Dawn and Betty Lou, only a very few are girls.

The female puppets always play children, while the male puppets play adult parts in various scenes. . . . Further, almost all the baby puppet characters on "Sesame Street" are girls. . . . Also, the female puppet characters almost never interact with each other. In sharp contrast, consequential and caring friendship relationships have been fully developed between male puppets: Ernie and his best friend Bert; Big Bird and his closest comrade Snuffie; even Oscar the Grouch and his (male) worm, Squirmy.

[April 14, 1992]

San Francisco Bay Guardian

More on Sen. Al Gore's cleavage between mind and body, as fishing turns into a cruel and unusual national pastime:

On March 9, a San Francisco woman in her 30s was hung from 28 wire-suspended fishhooks, all pieced through the flesh of her back, legs, and buttocks. This was a women-only event. More than 80 spectators and friends were in attendance at the black-walled South of Market space, drumming, chanting, and coaxing her on.

Raelyn Gallina, an East Bay piercer who has a lot of female clients, organized the event and did much of the piercing. "It was women doing it for women," she says. "It was a very powerful experience. There were women who *needed* to be there. This was a major, history-making thing. There were three videographers and two still photographers. Women would cheer every time a hook went in." . . .

Gallina has her own thoughts on the popularity of body play. "Basically," she says, "the world is meaningless. There's just your body and you. That's all you've got."

[May 27, 1992]

Boston Globe

An intriguing communiqué from columnist Susan Trausch, tapping out the immensities from her padded cell:

The old "Star Wars" gang is behind this one, of course. At a meeting in January in Los Alamos (where else?) they talked about 10 ground-based missiles, each with 100 megatons of firepower, pointed forever at the heavens, and saying, in effect, "This universe ain't big enough for you and me, Bart."

You don't think that might tick somebody off? I mean, what if God is an asteroid? Anything is possible out there, and perhaps the great power, or powers, have just about had it with the Earth, and this could push them over the edge.

Wanting to obliterate the Soviets was bad enough, but starting an arms race with the infinite is asking for one heck of a cosmic rap in the mouth.

[April 11, 1992]

New York Times Book Review

In his review of *Ecocide in the USSR*, Prof. Douglas R. Weiner makes the conventional Liberal's customary plea for missing the point, avoiding the obvious, and, in general, affecting the bleary-eyed muzziheadedness that is the proud characteristic of America's bovine intelligentsia:

It would be a pity, however, if we drew the restricted conclusion that this sobering story was merely an indictment of the Communist system. Although the impulses for the unlimited and dangerous transformation of the environment were more apparently political (and less economic) in the former Soviet Union than they are here, the bottom line is that both countries seemed to have been headed toward the same destination. The Communists just reached it first.

[June 7, 1992]

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